A

Father as he should be.

A Novel.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

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AUTHOR OF

SAYS SHE TO HER NEIGHBOUR, CLERGYMAN'S WIDOW, VISIT TO LONDON, PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE, &c. &c.

That friendship may be at once fond and lasting, there must be not only equal virtue on each part, but virtue of the same kind; not only the same end must be proposed, but the same means must be approved by both. Friendship composed of esteem and love, derives from one its tenderness, and its permanence from the other. Marriage is the most perfect union of friendship. *Rambler.*

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A FATHER AS HE SHOULD BE.



CHAP. I.

IT had not escaped the observation of Louisa, that the private soldier, like her own servants, and even some whom she had known in the Highlands, disliked Donald Mackenzie; undoubtedly for that haughtiness and inconsiderateness, which she was obliged, from various instances, to acknowledge was a prominent part of his character. His flirtation with Adelaide, she was persuaded, arose from no worse principle than vanity; but seeing that a handsome man must be continually exposed to a certain degree of admiration, she was aware that if this failing led him to seek it,

his wife must be kept in continual alarm. Besides, the foible was of a nature utterly incompatible with her ideas of a hero, still more so were her conceptions of all that was ungrateful and selfish in character; and although she could not bring herself to deem Donald was either, in a positive degree, yet she could not reflect without perceiving that he was sufficiently so to have rendered *her* unhappy; yet even this conviction could not wean her heart from hanging over his memory with that fond predilection, that last lingering hope and tender regret, which characterizes love's departing influence, and like the perfume of the rose, survives its blossoms. The virtues which imagination had intermingled with reality, still survived to grace the distinguished object; and as they were of her own painting, so she dwelt on them with a two-fold affection; she yielded obedience to her father, but it was still a sacrifice. . . . . . .

The baronet from day to day had read all this in his daughter, but he had likewise

marked many circumstances which encouraged him to hope, for his sake, she had exerted all the energies of her mind; she had resumed her activity, took pleasure in works of benevolence and charity, of knowledge and taste; and in a situation which extended her sphere of action, she would not fail to conquer what remained of that weakness which he deplored, especially when an object for whom she already felt the truest esteem and friendship was ever at hand to guide her taste, confirm her virtues, extend to her a protection still tenderer than his own, and offer a still stronger motive of duteous exertion and self-conquest.

Thus reasoned the father, and on this reasoning he acted; with the utmost gentleness he mentioned his wishes to Louisa, and in few, but expressive terms, pointed out the worth of Edward, and the obligations their family ought to feel to him on Henry's account; observing, at the same time, that his love for *her* had doubtless been his principal motive.

"In fact," added the baronet, "he has loved you from his boyish days; he has served these seven years for you, like Jacob, and you will not allow your father now to cheat him as Laban did?"

Louisa gave a deep sigh, the tears stood in her eyes, and her countenance was troubled: at length, struggling, she said, "Yet I must ask a little longer time; it shall not be seven more years, my dear father."

"Nor seven months, my love?"

"We will say no more till September at least."

"Agreed, my love; he will visit us daily, but it shall be as a friend only till then."

Edward accepted this permission gratefully; and gratefully did he watch every apparent circumstance that led him to hope he was ever likely to be beloved. A year ago he might have been persuaded that mere assent from a woman was a sufficient indication of preference, and been blest by that; but he had witnessed the passion of Antonia, and although aware of

the difference of character in her mind and education from Louisa's, he was yet aware also that in true tenderness of feeling, and its expression, as directed to her parents and brother, the latter far exceeded the former, and he could not therefore fail being sensible, that she felt nothing beyond the friendship of her infantine years for him, at the utmost; there were times when his fears induced him to place her cold regards and calm assent below the feelings of that happier period.

Whatever might be the fears and anxieties of the lover, they were equalled by those of the parents of Louisa; and although the baronet talked of getting stronger, and ventured to predict the period as fast approaching when he should recover his looks, it became so evident to his friends that he grew worse, that lady Mowbray became extremely anxious for the best medical advice; and as lady Welbrooke was prevailed upon to return to town with her sister Mrs. Danvers, for that

purpose, she proposed accompanying sir Francis there also.

The baronet could not bear London at this season of the year, but on finding it possible to return to the house at Twickenham they had engaged during the last spring, he consented, and they all adjourned thither.

Dr. B—— was of opinion that lady Welbrooke had an affection of the lungs, which positively required the early aid of a warmer climate, and as it was very likely to relieve the baronet's symptoms, and at any rate assist the disposition to nervous debility which oppressed him, he earnestly recommended to them both a voyage to the Madeiras in the autumn, and their affectionate and alarmed families on each side entreated them to comply with the injunction.

Lady Welbrooke consented; the baronet declined fixing on any plan for a month or two. In the mean time, Edward was now more than ever an inmate in his

house, as the distance from town furnished an excuse for remaining at Twickenham, and his society was evidently a relief, nay, a treat to the baronet, whilst the attention he yet constantly paid his mother, and the pains he took to amuse and comfort her, rendered his actions the constant eulogists of his disposition. When Louisa first entered this house, her mother observed an air of peculiar melancholy affect her, which she had no doubt arose from the memory of her past sufferings there, and she therefore endeavoured by every possible means to dissipate the reflections which might obtrude; and as the weather was now delightful, and the country around almost as novel as it was charming, their rides and walks were varied in every possible way, and they were enabled just so far to mingle with society, as to enjoy all its pleasures without its restraints; the frequent presence of Edward still operating so as to prevent any application from lovers to Louisa, though her presence never failed to inspire admiration.

Louisa ever avoided being alone with Edward; her mother was perpetually claimed as a companion, when no younger one was present; but yet it was evident that during his absence he was much missed by her, and that his society gave an additional charm to every ramble, and at length one species of enjoyment he was admitted to all the honours of bestowing. Louisa was particularly fond of the little water excursions this beautiful scene renders so peculiarly pleasing, and she confessed that she never felt herself so secure as when with Edward, who was not only careful to keep her safe, but to preserve her even from any idea of danger, and therefore permit her the full sense of that soul-soothing tranquillity the scene around was calculated to inspire. The lofty elms and beauteous willows that fringe the banks of the Thames, now hiding, and now partially revealing, the lovely villas and splendid mansions that adorn these classic shores—the sylvan islands, the light vessels, and the stately swans, that successively charm and

amuse the eye, upon the silvery bosom of the river—the ripple of the current, and the light splashing of the oar, alone disturbing the delicious stillness of the air, produced altogether a species of wild and pensive pleasure, of magical serenity, and holy calmness; well suited to allay the fervor of passion, and awake the gentler joys of friendship; and from this cause it was probable that sometimes as Louisa now gazed at the landscape, as it gently receded from her view, and now, with half-shut eyes, that only skimmed the rippling surge, listened to the notes of Edward's flute, or to his finely-modulated voice, as he read some favourite passage from Childe Harolde, felt as if she no longer were unhappy, and, though sad, no longer sorrowful.

Time passed; Edward was summoned to attend Adelaide's marriage; and although he was not long absent, Louisa observed one day, "she did not see any occasion there was for the whole of a large family

to attend the wedding; she wondered when Emma would be back."

"She will return with her brother in September," said the baronet.

The word September called up a sigh and a blush in Louisa; the father returned the first internally, but he saw the second with pleasure.

"In October, lady Welbrooke must go," said lady Mowbray, "and indeed I think we ought to go with her."

"So we will, my dear, if Louisa permits it."

"I permit it! my dear father, I wish you to go very much; surely I need not say that I would gladly make the circuit of the globe with you."

"But, my love, whenever I set out, we must part; on this subject I am decisive. I have thought much, and said little, being willing to spare us all from anticipations that could not fail to give pain; for the same reason, I have avoided naming my complaints; but since we are on the subject, it is, I believe, my duty to say that I

am not as much better as I expected to be, and that I believe I ought to go abroad. But I am not *ill,* my dear child; you shall not be any way hurried."

Louisa, unable to reply, left the room in tears, nor did she come back. Sir Francis and his lady took their usual walk, and some time had elapsed since their return, when being assured they were alone, she entered the breakfast-room, having an old letter, and various loose papers in her hand; her eyes were swollen, and as she entered, the colour rose on her cheek, otherwise her features were serene; but she made several vain attempts at speaking, ere she was able to say, "Here is a letter —a letter, my dear mother—a letter, sir— that I—I—I wish you to burn, if you can forgive me for having so long withheld it."

Sir Francis took her hand, and drawing her to his breast, tenderly kissed her.

"These papers must be burnt too."

The papers in question appeared to be

written in broken essays, or fragments; there were many pieces of poetry apparently amongst them.

"They need not be burnt, my love; you will confide them to your mother?" said lady Mowbray.

"Only for that purpose," said Louisa, with a sort of trembling firmness.

Sir Francis tore the letter and the fragments into a thousand pieces.

"You are content with this, my child; it is a sacrifice due not less to your delicacy and your principles, than to the future peace of him I perceive you mean to honour with your hand, and to bless with your affection."

Louisa's parched and quivering lip moved, but she could not articulate the faintly uttered "yes."

Lady Mowbray reached her a glass of water.

"My mother, my dear, *dear* mother," cried the poor girl, throwing her arms round her neck, "I have still something to say."

" But do not be thus agitated, my dear good girl."

" Not always good: in this room—at that very window—"

" You saw captain Mackenzie? Was that what you meant to say?"

" It was; that interview cost you all those days and nights of sorrow you suffered with me last winter. Do you, can you forgive me? I have no other confession, no other sacrifice to make."

The weeping mother, the ever-tender father, by turns clasped her to their bosoms; and while they praised her ingenuousness, invigorated her virtue; but trembling, and almost fainting in their arms, the baronet almost dreaded the event he had so long and ardently desired, and he inquired, with faltering accents, " Surely my Louisa does not deem herself a sacrifice?"

Louisa answered by a deep-drawn sigh.

" Answer me, my child; have you not perfect esteem for Edward Sefton? do you, from any observation on his temper, man-

ners, or character, in any respect believe that my partiality is ill founded, or that there is in him any peculiarity not congenial to your own perception of what is both good and agreeable?"

"Oh no! I think him an excellent young man."

"And his person is not disagreeable to you, Louisa?"

"Certainly not."

"You consider his understanding good?"

"I consider it very superior; I always did."

"Then, my dear child, depend upon it you will one day be happy; I mean, as happy as any reasonable woman desires to be—as any accountable creature placed in a state of probation ought to be; and every other kind of happiness is as improper for such creatures as we are, as it is in its own nature short lived, and misleading. I have studied your nature, Louisa, with too much tender anxiety not to know that

it is absolutely necessary to your happiness to marry a man whose temper and good principles will lead him to treat you with continued indulgence and increasing tenderness, and whose taste and mental powers are so similar to your own, that you may find in him that constant companion, that domestic amuser, nature has peculiarly qualified you to desire and deserve, and which is so rarely met with in the circles of rank and fashion, that having found such a gem, it was no wonder that I wished to secure him, and preserve him for you, even against your own desire; but, undoubtedly, had your own choice been equally, or even nearly calculated to make you happy as a wife, I should have gladly ceded my judgment to your love. As it was, I beheld you nursing a passion, which might have made you blest for a month, and miserable for the rest of your days; since you would have found by bitter experience, that a vain, selfish man, living for himself and the world, whatever might have been his passion for your person,

could not so have loved you as you deserve to be loved, nor could have been rendered happy by that system your affection and your habits would naturally prescribe; and that the talents, the power, the person which had infatuated you, (and will ever infatuate many,) would, instead of becoming your blessing, only add to your uneasiness, by showing you that perversion of talent renders every fault, in the person so gifted, more odious."

"I can conceive all that, for I have, even in my short acquaintance with some persons, felt at times angry that with the apparent power of perfection, they were not perfect—but still—"

"Ah, my love, still you hoped, and so does every woman hope, who gives her heart where her reason cannot justify her choice; but depend upon it, she never repents who marries the man that she approves, although some little regrets may hang about her heart; and when to this you add the consciousness that one obeys the will, fulfils the wishes of her parents,

sheds the beam of comfort on their declining days, and perhaps sheds its brightest lustre on the deathbed of——"

Louisa caught her father for a moment to her breast, and her speaking eye seemed to beg him to spare her an image she could not endure. Sir Francis did spare *her*, but his own heart was unable to control the emotion he had awakened; he left the room; the mother and daughter remained silent; they were alike deeply pensive; one unable to shake off the past, notwithstanding her recent resolution, the other trembling as she looked forward to the future, but too well aware how many heartaches wait upon discovered love.

After a long pause, Louisa said, "My dear mother, I am still very young; I am rich, blest with parents and friends, and every comfort to make a single state happy; why then should I marry?"

"Your father, my dear child, thinks his health precarious, and he wishes to see you married before——"

"I understand all that, but if my happiness is his object, and he dreads lest the acuteness of my feelings should prevent it by an union with a man of defective temper and principles, why marry me at all? Since the state in itself opens a wider field for suffering than a single life can possibly do, I will engage not to marry at all, either during his life, or——"

"My dear child, we have travelled over this ground so often, I thought I should never be called to go over it again, especially as your manners of late have certainly given Mr. Sefton a right to believe he was well received by you."

"Very true, mother; I will say no more. I believe Edward does really love me, and I do not know any friend in whose society I so much forget the sorrows of the past as his; but still the thoughts of marriage affright—afflict me; I dread the arrival of a time which will make it sinful even to think of Donald; and when I look at Edward, I feel as if I could love him best as a friend, in whom I could repose my sor-

rows, not as a husband, from whom it is my duty to hide and banish them. I would not use him ill by disappointing him, still less ought I to reward his faithful attachment by giving him a hand without a heart."

"You must endeavour, my love, to nourish his virtues, his love for you, and his taste, in your mind; busy yourself with thinking of him, and, as far as you are able, of *him only*; for, depend upon it, Louisa, it is now your duty to become his wife: above all things, avoid considering yourself sacrificed to your father, and allowing yourself to indulge any romantic grief on that account; hold your mind as far as possible free from the past, and look to the future as that entrance into a life of duty, which is the common lot of your sex, and, indeed, of every human being: avoid idleness above all things, and employ your sensibility in contemplating, relieving, and sympathizing with your fellow-creatures, and in daily thanking God for the power he has thus bestowed upon you.

A woman who lives in the active exercise of virtue imperceptibly overcomes the dominion of passion, you already know; and as your circle of activity enlarges, you will find the present uneasiness and anxiety which oppresses you disperse, and, as your father says, you *will* be happy."

"Never! *never!*" thought Louisa; but she did not suffer the words to escape her lips, for she saw that her mother's heart at some moments was wrung with the anguish fear and solicitude implanted, and that her highest hope, in fact, arose to seeing her daughter a good woman, rather than a happy one, but that she repeated her father's maxims, and was herself trembling for the future; and Louisa, therefore, for *her* sake, determined to adopt *her* maxims, that she might not add to the oppression under which she already laboured.

On Edward's return, he learnt from the baronet the perfect consent of Louisa to their nuptials taking place in a few weeks; nor did the gentle assent, the smothered sigh, with which she listened to his grateful

ecstacy, awaken any suspicion that her heart had really known another lord; but, happy as he felt himself, he could have wished that even the modesty of Louisa had suffered those sparkling indications of joy to steal from beneath her silken lashes, which were wont to illume her eyes during their Highland tour; and the violent throbbing in his own heart taught him how strong was the contrast to hers, although she was by no means as calm as she endeavoured to appear, and this, on reflection, was his comfort.

Happily for Louisa, with every consultation respecting her marriage was combined the arrangements for the departure of her parents, from whence arose a sorrow so natural, that it would have been cruel to blame, and unworthy to mistrust it. It was indeed fully partaken by Edward himself, who, in parting from his justly-revered and fondly-beloved mother, felt as if scarcely even the possession of Louisa would repay her loss. This very circumstance the baronet looked to as the me-

dium of a happy understanding between a son and daughter so situated, and but for it he would certainly have given Louisa a much longer period for reconciling her mind to the marriage, on which he had so ardently fixed his inclination.

Lord Welbrooke, on learning that his son was about to be married, notwithstanding his deficiencies of fortune, and that his wife was sentenced to exile, for a disorder which usually baffles alike climate or skill, could not with any degree of consistency avoid joining the family party. It was remarked by all that he was grown thin, and appeared to have been much harrassed in mind, but his manners had lost nothing of their usual charm. After the first awkwardness of meeting sir Francis on business was over, his attentions to his intended daughter in-law were such as could not fail to awaken her gratitude and confidence; the fact was, lord Welbrooke was not a little rejoiced to find that sir Francis was really going abroad, as he should by that means be rid of a man whose probity and pe-

netration were equally annoying to him, and whom he had particular reasons for wishing to be out of the way at this time, but whose good name as a family alliance was equally desirable to him; and he therefore became every way kind and accommodating to all parties; and though sir Francis could not fail to despise his simulation and duplicity, as much as he detested the vices which had led to it, he yet, for Edward's sake, treated him with all due respect; and considering that hypocrisy is indeed the homage which vice pays to virtue, and that no character is hopeless where shame is left, and a desire to keep up appearances bespeaks a sense of guilt, he permitted his lordship to believe that he was deceived in his character still; and by thus treating him as if he were indeed a good father and husband, induced him in some respects to acquit himself like one.

Adelaide, now become the wife of sir Pennett Lawson, having now resigned her eldest sister, was desirous of retaining her younger during the absence of her mother;

but lady Welbrooke preferred placing her under the protection of Mrs. Danvers, considering Emma as the properer companion for one so young, and wishing likewise to leave her eldest daughter the power of passing much of her time with Louisa, without leaving her good aunt companionless: from this arrangement, the house in town would have no inhabitant save its lord, and as he intended spending most of the ensuing winter in Bath, he proposed that the young couple should inhabit it; observing to lady Mowbray, that he had no doubt but when he came to town, her daughter would take him in: the proposal appeared agreeable to every one but Edward, who, as the latter clause was made in his father's speech, turned pale, and his mother observed him give a slight shudder; but it was impossible to say any thing in objection to a scheme apparently so feasible, and accordingly it was so settled.

With respect to money-matters, the baronet was at once liberal and prudent; he considered the youth of the parties, and

concluded that a short time of trial might do them no harm; but in this respect he was forestalled by Edward, who refused all assistance at present, but such as would enable him to support his idolized bride in her present situation; and for this purpose he chose rather to hold himself indebted to Mrs. Danvers than to the baronet—a mode of conduct it was impossible for the latter not to approve as manly and independent; and he therefore agreed not to give any other fortune with Louisa than her present possession until her coming of age, when he determined to insure complete independence to the admirable young man, whom every circumstance combined to raise in his opinion.

These family arrangements were now joined by lady Selthorpe, who had been to Scarborough, where she left the colonel, for the purpose of seeing her niece avowedly, but in fact, to offer herself as the companion of her brother's voyage, should she find the proposition agreeable to lady

Welbrooke, whose somewhat reserved manners on their first meeting had impressed her with the idea that her *gaieté de cœur* might be mistaken; she was not only welcomed with pleasure, but on mentioning her scheme, it was most thankfully accepted by both ladies, who hailed it as a circumstance more likely to benefit the invalids than any change of climate, as she would be the very soul of the party.

"But, my dear sister," cried the baronet, "will the colonel consent to parting with you?"

"My good brother, what right have you to suppose the colonel unkind, or desirous of abridging my pleasures? Does not all the world see me every where, and am I not considered the most lively, gay—in short, the life of the party?"

"True, most true; but your present schême of pleasure is of so odd a nature, that really——"

"Really I will do it, so say no more."

"I shall however write to the colonel."

"You may spare yourself that trouble; I have got his full consent."

"Then we shall have the pleasure of seeing him soon," said lady Mowbray, "as he will doubtless come to town before we set out."

"He may, but I prohibited him from bidding me any formal adieu; such things are quite out, you know; besides which, they are my abomination; I hate long faces, and blowing noses; stage crying is the only crying I can endure, because the heroine of a tragedy never uses her handkerchief indelicately, you know."

"What can a woman of your habits do out of your own world? really, sister, you must not go."

"I am not used to contradiction, so don't thwart me; I shall do wonders; I shall make *you* foolishly agreeable, your wife unruly and charming, and lady Welbrooke as gay as myself, and as blooming as her daughter; in short, I shall do any thing, every thing; polish the sailors, ado-

nize the captain; very likely teach the herrings to waltz, and the sharks to figure in a bollero. I have seen several land exhibitions of the kind lately."

"Reserve your examples and your spirits, my dear; we shall need them all on board."

Louisa saw beneath all this affectation of gaiety that her dear aunt was but a performer, and as she had herself said, "happy by profession;" she was grieved to lose in her one whom she considered an invaluable chaperon, but was well aware that to the dear party to whom she had from the purest kindness offered herself, she would be of the greatest importance, she could not be so selfish as to wish her to stay. The idea of parting with those beloved parents from whom she had never been separated from her earliest infancy, became every day more terrible to her, and occupied her mind so much, that as sir Francis had foreseen, even her own marriage became secondary to it in her consideration; and Edward rose in interest with her, be-

cause he was the only person who equally sympathized with her feelings.

The beginning of October bestowed on Edward the hand of the only woman for whom he had ever breathed a sigh, save that of pity; he received it as heaven's best gift, and prized it only too dearly for his own happiness, for his heart, like that of his lovely bride, was only too much alive to the finer perceptions of those minds that "urge sensibility to madness," and find the commonest occurrences of life, as connected with love, can "touch the nerve where agony is born;" but happily he combined with this sensibility the resolution of a strong mind, and that acquired patience taught by early subjugation, and religious submission.

Louisa sought for self-conquest by humility, and earnest prayer, and she did not seek in vain: but the struggles of her mind could not fail to be written in pretty legible characters, on features so ingenuous, and manners so artless as hers: to common observers the dejection visible in

her silence, and the efforts she used to make her language appear cheerful, passed for sorrow at parting with her parents; but lady Welbrooke was too well read in the human heart, not to feel assured that Louisa's did not take refuge in her son's affection as it ought to have done; and she with difficulty avoided betraying her fears, when advising him tenderly to study her character, and insure her happiness. This advice she likewise repeated to her daughter Emma, for although it shocked her to believe that a son she so intirely loved, and highly appreciated, was married to one who did not return his affection fully, yet she had the highest opinion of Louisa, as a well-principled, amiable, and sensible young woman, and she conceived it very possible that in time she might love as she was loved; indeed she could scarcely doubt it, esteeming as she did the temper and manners of her son.

The dreaded hour at length arrived; the dear, the venerated father, for whom she had suffered so much, pressed her to his

bosom, for a long, perhaps a last adieu; the beloved mother, who had so often wept with her, and for her, from whom she had never experienced reproof, or known anger, gave her a parting kiss. All the baronet's rhetoric to strengthen or console her, seemed spent in vain, and that sensibility it had been the business of his life to guide and restrain, now overflowed its bounds, as if freed from the only hand that could restrain it; she wept as if the grave itself had bereaved her of her parents, and as if some long-cherished sorrow had at length burst its bounds, and with all the force of accumulated and aggravated grief, overwhelmed her soul, and almost unsettled her reason.

CHAP. II.

Louisa's grief, though violent, and in some respects lasting, was however not obstinate; the deep affliction painted on her husband's countenance recalled her to a sense of duty, and she saw that to obey her father's precepts, was indeed the true way of showing how she valued him. She therefore struggled to attain resignation, and to accept of the amusement those around held out to her: she considered that Edward and Emma had parted with a mother as dear as her own; but remembering the affection of her parents for each other, she concluded that there was no sufferer in their circle so great as lord Welbrooke, and therefore towards him she looked for sympathy; and towards him she directed every thing she could dictate in consolation: it appeared strange to Louisa, and gave her the first, and indeed only painful

impression she ever received of her husband's character, that he never surveyed her attentions to his father with an approving eye. Ignorant as she was of the viscount's character, it appeared to her utterly unaccountable that he should not take delight in every thing which, by approaching to a better acquaintance between them, might have served to inform him that she was willing to render *his* father the place her *own* had lately occupied; and that in doing so, she added a new and tender link to the ties which bound them to each other.

Emma saw this, and spoke upon it with her usual *naiveté*, which was happy for them both, as it enabled Edward to rejoice in every thing that looked like increasing confidence and happiness in Louisa; but he was utterly unable to controul in himself the trembling sensation which seized him when his father approached Louisa, or forbear to listen when he addressed her in an under voice, which it was much his

lordship's custom to use, when he wished to be particularly kind or interesting, and which he adopted on subjects the most plain and simple in themselves, when he desired that the person he addressed should consider him as having particular confidence in them. But when, in order to enforce his words, the viscount took the hand of his new daughter, sometimes pressing it between his own, and sometimes with tender respect bearing it to his lips, the distress of Edward was intolerable; he could neither behold it with patience, nor venture to fly from it; and he inwardly cursed the moment when he had consented to reside in his father's house; yet he struggled to conceal his emotions both from his wife and sister, but in doing this frequently seemed petulant and unaccountable to both; and there were times when the former was ready to think, that Edward had not the temper her father had sacrificed Donald to obtain for her; but even when this was the case, she could not but be sen-

sible that in loving more, she should have suffered more in such moments.

Luckily for both, Mrs. Danvers spent one day with them when there was a large party, and the viscount was what she termed "showing off," by his tender attentions to his daughter-in law, and his general politeness to the company. Louisa was in a situation new and oppressive to her, and though her manners were ever elegant, yet she was not sufficiently at ease to shew the attention she wished to those around her, especially as her beauty, and the splendour of her bridal habiliments, naturally drew all eyes towards her. The viscount not only made up her deficiencies, but gave her confidence in herself, by the kindness of his attentions, and the judiciousness of his whispered commendations, which from time to time awakened a glow of gratitude, or a blush of conscious error in the cheek of Louisa. Mrs. Danvers sat near enough to observe all this, as far as the eye went; she saw likewise, as she imagined, more than was meant; the good lady re-

tained her sight much better than hearing, and was not aware that something was addressed to Louisa at the bottom of the table, to which she had not attended, when she perceived the viscount gently press her hand.

Mrs. Danvers had the most dreadful idea possible of lord Welbrooke's powers as a seducer; she had been heard to say, "that if he set himself to do it, she did not know but he might ruin *her*, much as she hated him;" and the idea of his powers being exerted against his young and artless daughter-in-law, for a moment froze her blood with horror; in a short time she became aware that her fears had far outrun the truth; but, however, "safe bind, safe find," was a maxim he had taught her, and she resolved to put it in practice.

When the company were assembled in the drawing-room, they began to speak of the emptiness of London, and some one observed, all the world was now at Brighton.

"Then let us make a part of the world,"

said Mrs. Danvers to Louisa; "I will take a house, if one is to be got; if not, we will procure lodgings; but, at any rate, you and my nephew will become my guests there, I hope, for the remainder of the season."

Louisa assented with pleasure, and Edward with something more than pleasure; no invitation was extended to his lordship, who did not, however, throw the slightest bar in the way: the truth was, Mrs. Danvers held him in some awe; she was mistress of many of his secrets, she had considerable influence over his lady, and she had a large fortune at her own disposal—three very weighty reasons for his concurrence with her pleasure.

To Brighton they therefore went, and they found there not only frivolity which amused them, but in society with each other, which was unbroken by any petty jealousy, a species of tranquillity which soothed the heavy period which must necessarily intervene, before they could learn the fate of those for whom they were in-

terested. Whilst they remained here, letters were forwarded from Henry, and a package containing a present of costly pearls for Louisa, whom he congratulated on her marriage with his inestimable friend, as a circumstance that could not fail to insure her happiness; and spoke of himself as no longer enjoying any, but in his sympathy with her.

In his letter to Edward, he entered more fully into his feelings, and the vexations which still continued to harrass him, though he was now on the frontiers of France, and far removed from Antonia. "My spirits," said he, "are no longer depressed in the manner you have witnessed; I neither moan to the wind, nor court the sword of the enemy; but yet I am stupid and disquieted alternately; life has lost its relish, fortune its zest; if I laugh, it is without mirth; if I pursue any object, save the duty of a soldier, it is without interest; my heart is no longer full of Antonia, but there is in it a vacancy which produces nearly as much wretched-

edness as that from which I have struggled to release myself: sometimes I feel an apathy the whole world seems unable to rouse; at others, an irritability it is in vain to controul; and I have lately learned a circumstance, which serves not a little to increase its action.

"Mackenzie, our old Highland friend, for whom I now honestly confess I contracted almost an impassioned attachment, is now paying his addresses to Antonia: perhaps you know that Louisa refused him, perhaps *not*; for the affair happened during your absence here, and both her and the baronet have too just a sense of what is due to a discarded lover to publish his discomfiture: be that as it may, he was refused, and he returned enraged so much with my father-in-law, that I believe he became ambitious to supplant me with Antonia, with whom it had become pretty generally known I had made a fool of myself. Chance favoured his design; he was useful to her; and as he is an irresistible kind of a fellow, you know, there is no saying what

may happen. I wish his uncle knew how the matter stands; for, in truth, however sir Donald may feel towards me, I wish him better than that he should marry Antonia, whose liking cannot be depended on; or who will marry him perhaps to assist his revenge, and her own. Poor girl, she is to be pitied after all; she has cost me more than I once believed the whole world of women could do; nor do I think that any other woman will ever supply her place in my heart; but an affair has lately happened to a young merchant with whom I am acquainted, that has somewhat reconciled me to my misfortune; he loved a Spanish girl named Victorina, who refused him only because he was a Protestant; the youth, like many others, had thought very little of the religion he professed, till it was thus made an objection; but he then began to consider the subject, and found that to renounce a rational system, and what was a species of national character, for that which in his eyes was little better than a mixture of enthusiastic faith, and

idle mummeries, would be unmanly and degrading to *him*, and extremely offensive to his friends; yet love eventually triumphed, and Victorina, glorying in her proselyte, took care that his recantation of errors, and his admittance into the bosom of the true church, should be as public as possible. When the lover claimed that hand which was to be the reward of his apostacy, Victorina, with great gravity, informed him, that all she had done was for the good of his soul, she being engaged to a countryman of her own before she had the happiness of knowing him; and added, with great *sang froid*, 'that although she esteemed him highly for having renounced his errors, yet it was impossible for her to love an Englishman.'

"Now what do you think would have become of me, had I been led step by step to this horrible, this maddening situation? Assuredly I should have shot myself. Never, never could I have beheld sir Francis more, never have set foot on my native land; my blood alternately boils and

freezes when I think of it. Don't say, Edward, that my mind could not have been worked up to this pitch of degradation and guilt; whilst I believed Antonia loved me, and was artless as affectionate, she might have led me to any thing; might, did I say? Alas! did not the hellish passion brewed in my heart through her, actually lead me to a still greater crime? Did I not lift up my hand against you, my friend, my brother, you who sought and saved me?

"Say what you please, endeavour to reconcile me as you may, I never will, nor can forgive my madness. I have a dreadful kind of satisfaction in the self-detestation, the avenging bitterness of that penitence which from time to time swells in my mind, and tortures me by a review of my own folly and passion, and a long succession of probable events; you say your family are strangers to it, and that the reports which reached my country through a public medium mentioned no names. Ah, Edward! little did I once think ever to have courted silence; and, in fact, it was a bur-

den I could not live under with my mother and the baronet; but I must beseech you to continue it in your own family, or how am I ever to look your mother in the face? and Emma, sweet Emma, will never smile on me again. By the way, how happens Adelaide to be married first? she was a child two years ago."

The reading of this letter made Mr. Sefton look very grave, for he knew that so far was Henry from being either a complainer, or one who would make an ostentatious display, even of a worthy sentiment, that the words in which he had spoken of his feelings had been wrung from him by the severity of a repentance which still harrowed his heart. Emma, with a half-joking air, meant to dissemble the real interest she felt, inquired what love affair the captain had got in hand now, which required so deep a cogitation on the part of his Mentor?

"Oh, he is not in love now, by no means."

"Well, what does he say then? you are

not half so good as your lady; you don't tell us any news, not even that we are going to have peace."

"I will tell you one thing which will serve you to think about; Henry wonders how it happens that Adelaide is married first."

"Oh the saucebox! do, dear brother, just shew me the passage; let me have a l—ittle peep, now do; just a little, *little* peep?"

"No, that I wont," returned he laughing, and leaving the room, Emily following, and still begging for a sight of the sentence which mentioned herself.

"'Tis almost strange, I think myself," said Louisa, addressing Mrs. Danvers, "that Emma is not married; she is so very engaging, and so fond of society, that there appears a twofold reason for expecting it: yet she has refused two eligible offers since I knew her; perhaps she did not choose to be married till she was of age; or perhaps you did not perfectly approve the parties?"

"I believe neither myself nor her had any peculiar *penchant* for them; and why should Emily marry any one she could not perfectly love? she has time enough to look about her, you know, and fortune enough to make her be seen after at all times."

Louisa gave a deep sigh, answering, "certainly."

"To let you into a little secret which I have never divulged to any human being, lest they should call me a romantic old woman, I have always hoped and wished that Emily would not marry till a peace should take place."

Louisa smiled; she had an idea that Emma herself had no objection to an officer of her acquaintance; but Mrs. Danvers put all her ideas to flight.

"You must know, Mrs. Sefton," continued she, "that somewhere about five years ago, I was walking from one shop to another in Piccadilly; I shall never forget what a raw, cold, boisterous kind of morning it was; just before me there were three

young gentlemen walking; I rather think they were all officers, but only one wore regimentals, and that was the one who stole my heart; he was as handsome a youth——Oh! my very heart aches when I think it is not ten to one but he has been laid in the dust many a battle ago."

Louisa now gave a sigh of sympathy, as she too thought on the many thus described, and thus disposed of.

"Well, my dear, so as I was saying, just before them was walking a poor girl with a shabby drest child in her arms, may be a little brother, and the girl had a pitcher in the other hand; just as I looked at her the wind took off the child's hat, and blew it into the street; the girl was evidently in great distress; she could not run after the hat; the child cried; she had not a hand even to cover its head, on which there was scarcely any hair, and in passing, two brutish fellows offered to take the pitcher from her. I was quite vexed that I had left the footman at the other shop, but all at

once away darted my dear young officer, pursued the old hat, caught it with some difficulty, and despite of the laughter of his companions, placed and even tied on the head of the little roaring brat."

"God bless him!" said Louisa, warmly.

"Ah, my dear, but that wasn't all; I saw him slip a piece of money into the poor girl's hand as he did it; and in order to thank him, she pushed back a huge old bonnet, and discovered a face of such extraordinary beauty, that the other two immediately fixed their eyes upon her, as if to say, 'the girl is worth his pains;' this was the moment of my triumph; never shall I forget the look of genuine pity, of calm dignity and modesty with which he repelled the insinuation conveyed in their looks, and hastened from the place. I am certain that young man was benevolent and virtuous, if ever man was; that he respected innocence, even more than he admired beauty, and he was just at the age when it dazzles men most; but what I liked in him best of all perhaps, was the

dignity of mind so rarely found in every young man, which was not ashamed of doing right, even in a matter connected with the ludicrous in the first instance, and open to misconstruction in the second; but if any thing had been wanting in this young man towards making a complete conquest of me, it would have been made up by the look he gave me; it was such a look. it seemed to say, "Madam, you look at that young creature; pity and protect her."

"And do you know any thing more of her, ma'am?"

"To be sure, I inquired all about her, and found she was a carpenter's daughter taking her father some broth; she was a good girl, as well as a pretty one, but rather a dawdle; however, Jenkins made her in the long run a very decent servant, and she was married last spring mighty well; but what I was going to say is this, I never saw the young man since in any place, public or private; but I have thought of him every day, and I have supposed, that if he were alive he would come home at

the peace; and then if he was still good, and turned out a man of tolerable connections, and should admire Emma, and Emma should like him, he should have her, whether he had fortune or not."

"A truly generous resolution, madam; but really it includes so many suppositions, that one can hardly hope for such a thing."

"Why not? the romance of real life exceeds all the wonders you find written in books; in fact, they sometimes present scenes so strange, and incidents so odd, that your sensible authoresses who want to give you really instructive stories, like Miss Edgeworth and Mrs. Opie, are almost afraid of meddling with them, lest they should be thought to present caricatures of circumstances, and preternatural combinations of situation."

"I am too new in the world to dispute the fact, madam; but it has never occurred, I believe, to any of my connections, to know a child discovered to its parents after supposing it to be lost; or one of them,

perhaps, never knowing it had been born; and yet this is a common *dénouement* in a novel, you know."

"Well, my dear, but though you smile, I can tell you that I know several instances of extraordinary things come to light in that way within the last thirty years; and that I was once present when a mother beheld a son whom she had not seen for two-and twenty years, and whom she had sought in vain all over Europe till that eventful moment."

"Heavens, what a moment! I would have given the world to have witnessed it; dear madam, pray tell me how it was brought about?"

"Oh, my dear, it was not half so fine and so affecting as it would have been in a book; we were a large party, and there was a Mrs. Harrison, just come from Holland; soon after enters two young ladies, with one of their lovers, really a pretty young man. I saw the stranger turn red and white, and red again; but as she was a plump, hearty-looking woman, I didn't

think much about her, till one of the ladies called him Mr. Edwards, and at the same moment, the bride-elect used his Christian name of Ferdinand; with that down dropt the Dutch stranger, and spilt her coffee all over old lady Mudge's white satin, whilst she came plump upon colonel Cramp's gouty feet, and made him roar like a cannon; then up got a young Dutchman, and lame .te over her with such vile sounds, that an old parrot couldn't bear to hear him, and she screamed in such a manner as to waken two favourite puppies, who began to bark in concert; the poor young fellow, who somehow began to conceive that he was the innocent cause of the hubbub, seemed petrified; but every thing around him was in motion; and in my whole life I never witnessed such confusion; some chattered, others whispered, not a few screamed, and colonel Cramp cursed famously; but on the whole, the parrot and dogs carried the day."

"But how did it end?"

"Oh, brandy restored her, poor soul; she had lived too long in Holland for aromatic vinegar, or any thing less powerful than Coniac to take effect: when, however, she was better, and able to call to her son, and the young man threw himself on his knees by her, and began to cry, why, I cried too, and several others, and so then it was moving enough: but really, fainting by fat people after forty, has comparatively very little effect, except, as I say, in a book, which, like a play, brings forward only its most striking incidents, and keeps scalding coffee, gouty feet, yelling lap-dogs, and screeching parrots, behind the scenes."

"I cannot think so, madam; whenever genuine feeling is discovered, and any of those great events in the lives of our fellow-creatures displayed which tend to confirm their happiness or misery, we must be deeply interested."

"True, we are interested, but not delighted; but I shall only insist that odd things do really occur, as a justification of

what you, in the wisdom of nineteen, contemn in me, as an out-o'-way expectation: but, pray now, what could be more romantic and queer altogether, than your finding the nephew of a nobleman driving Scotch bullocks on the top of a Highland mountain—rescuing your mother from an enraged cow—then turning soldier, fighting the French, coming home, like a knight-errant, to be knighted, and hallooed by the great mob, and the grand mob, and all with as much celerity as if some second-sighted seer, in his own land, had cried, like Boaz, 'heigh, presto, begone?'"

"It was very extraordinary, I grant."

"Extraordinary! aye, to be sure; and wanted no one ingredient of a story, but that he ought to have saved you instead of your mother—loved you to distraction—and being opposed by your cruel father, ran off with you to his own land of freedom and oat-cakes—and have somehow got possession of an estate, and lived like a feudal prince in the days of Ossian."

Happily for Louisa, Mrs. Danvers was

too much interested in her subject to perceive its effects; her cheeks were dyed by a torrent of blushes: Edward returning at the moment, increased her confusion to such a degree that she could not help leaving the room, but had the satisfaction of hearing the old lady begin to speak of a subject to which her too-evident confusion could have no possible reference; she however felt herself extremely shocked at perceiving herself capable of being thus moved; and the severe scrutiny to which she exposed herself, led her to guard her manners towards her husband with more than common vigilance, and to feel grateful to him for loving one so well, whose truant heart yet dared to feel emotion for another. Could Louisa have analyzed her feelings more accurately, she would have found at this time that her self-condemnation was not called upon to be thus rigid; the confusion under which she had suffered arose neither from cherished passion for Donald, nor repugnance to Edward, but merely from a chance review

of those long-renounced dreams of felicity she had once indulged in, presented to her from a person interested in her present feelings, and unintentionally touching on, or ridiculing her past prospects. Her manners became more tender, and if possible, more engaging, on the evening of this day, to Edward, than they had ever been; and as Henry was naturally the subject of their conversation, she of course was led to more peculiar expression of good-will towards her husband, by combining with him his kindness to Henry. Edward was aware of this; he imputed her kindness to gratitude, and he was willing to believe, that in a woman gratitude is perhaps the best kind of love; but yet he desired to have something more: why was a heart which overflowed with all the tenderest charities of nature, shut in that channel where they ought to flow most sweetly and freely? at times Mackenzie rose to his view, and Henry's assertion, that she had refused him, only awoke the fear that she had been persuaded to do it, perhaps

compelled: the thought was terrible, and could not last long; for every look, word, and action of the baronet towards her forbade it.

There are many husbands who would have been perfectly happy under Edward's circumstances, for Louisa was the most complying, obedient wife that ever man was blest with: 'tis true, her obedience was put to very little test, since it was the business of her husband's life—to amuse her time, and console her for the loss of her parents' society; yet still, in a daily and hourly intercourse with each other, all connections find out moments in which some renunciation of their own wills and schemes is called for; and on these occasions Louisa was ever ready to resign hers fully and freely; but when she was not engaged in conversation, when not employed in exercising her mind or her talents, there was a certain dejection in her features, an air of fear lest she should be doing wrong, and a transient blush that appeared to arise from consciousness, which alarmed the

doting lover, and gave him a sense that lovers only feel, who know too well "that only love can answer love, and render bliss secure."

To other observers the blooming Louisa appeared as happy as she was lovely; they saw only timidity in her pensiveness, and tenderness in her dejection; and the cunning and envious espied only in her struggles for cheerfulness a wish to appear animated, and to exhibit to the best advantage; but Edward felt that none of them were right; and his ardent heart, ever too acute in its feelings, sunk into a state little short of that morbid dejection from which he had lately emerged; society became tasteless, amusement insipid: the hopes of life seemed nipped in their bloom, and enjoyment withered, now it was transplanted to his heart.

This state of feeling could not continue long, for with such a father, actual misfortune prevented the mind from nourishing ideal ills, and he was soon under the ne-

cessity of returning to London, for the purpose of checking, as far as he was able, some mischief, to which he was a stranger, except in its consequences, as he found that his father was much distressed in his pecuniary affairs. The fact was, that the viscount, owing to his admiration of a young woman who was the natural daughter of a notorious gambler, had been induced to spend almost every evening, during his son's absence at Brighton, in society which had pillaged him of all his ready money; and the absence of his lady had rendered every other creditor clamorous for payment, because they were well aware that they could only be paid eventually through her means, and that some time must necessarily pass before the money could be forthcoming.

The appearance of Edward re-assured the latter, and being ever regular and just, equally from the precept and example of his mother, he took care scrupulously to discharge every demand upon himself; and this, together with the report of his wife's

fortune, gained not only respite to his father, but enabled him to borrow a sum of ready money with which he again gorged the insatiate maws of the circle to which he devoted himself, amongst whom colonel Bellair was a prominent and inordinate vulture.

As the viscount appeared easier, and pretty soon after their arrival in London set out, as he had proposed, for Bath, whither most of his associates had lately adjourned, so far as related to him, Edward became easy also; and as every relief afforded to the spirits gives them a kind of spring, he became more inclined to partake the amusements, and accept the pleasures of the metropolis, than he had ever done before; and as very pleasant letters were about this time received from sir Francis and his party, Louisa was left without a pretence for dejection and seclusion, and she willingly mixed in society, which deemed her justly its highest ornament.

Never had Louisa been so much an ob-

ject of attention and adulation as now; checked, on her first entrance into the gay world, by her ill-fated passion, she had literally enjoyed but the triumphs of a night; but she was now courted as the prime embellishment of every *fête*, the charm of every festive circle; her person, her dress, her words, her very gait, were considered the acme of fashion; and, if possible, her blushes would have been copied as exactly as their evanescent bloom was sought for in the rouge or carmine, which was used for a substitute.

But neither the libertine admiration of one sex, nor the imitation which bespoke acknowledged superiority in the other, seduced Louisa one moment from the noble simplicity, the virtuous integrity of her own character, and the unsullied purity of manners, which she considered as implied in her conjugal vows; her jealous watchfulness over her own heart, taught her such a sense of what was due to her husband, that probably had she loved him better, she would have been less guarded;

and the consciousness that she had not given him *all*, rendered her more desirous of making what she *did* and *could* bestow a more perfect present; and this was rendered the easier to her, from the daily increasing esteem she felt for him, and from the contrast he afforded to the frivolous fops, the boisterous jockies, or the uninformed men whom she so frequently met with.

As spring advanced, Louisa was beginning to sigh for the country, and to feel that it would be by no means unpleasant to her to spend more of her time with her husband; but that husband perceiving that her spirits were much better than they had been, imputed it to the power she possessed of mixing with society, and therefore carefully forbore giving a hint of going there. He remarked not only the guarded frankness and strict propriety of her manners in public, but her increased cheerfulness in private; but he ascribed both to the excellence of her principles and of her education; and there were times

when his admiration of her conduct was so intense, as almost to induce him to repent that he had ever married her, since he believed that he could never make her happy; and often would he wish that he could bless her, even by the sacrifice of himself; ever subject to extremes in feeling, though not in conduct, he would contemplate his own situation as one of remediless misery: his mother was at a great distance, perhaps separated for ever from him; his father it was impossible for him to esteem, or confide in; and his only friend could not on this occasion be made the repository of his fears and sorrows. "Would I were dead!" he would exclaim internally, "for then, at least, I should know that I blessed Louisa—then I should be aware that I had touched the heart over which I have now no power; she would remember me with tenderness, she would cherish the memory of that affection which cannot now avail to make her happy."

Thus was sorrow transferred from Louisa to her husband, who, in indulging it, gave

pain to her, who now thought more of him, and felt more towards him, than she had ever done before; and observed, in her turn, that his attentions, though not constrained, yet were paid in a silent, dejected manner, as if aware that he could communicate no comfort, he feared to offend, or teaze her by officiousness. Louisa thought there was some affliction on his mind which she ought to be acquainted with, and which she yet dared not ask to know; because the time had been, when she would not have been thus anxious; and she watched him with timid looks, fearful that she might seem inquisitive where she meant only to be kind; and he would not understand her half-uttered questions, because he could not reveal one part of his uneasiness, since she was its cause, and he did not wish to load her heart with the other, considering it already too heavily burdened, by being united to a man she could not love, or perhaps—agonizing thought! loving one she could not marry.

Thus were two amiable and excellent

people in a state of continual suffering, from causes equally inexplicable and unavoidable, when real sorrow became added to the burden. One day they were surprised by the sudden arrival of lord Welbrooke, who entered whilst they were at breakfast, having travelled all night: his complexion was livid, his air wild; and Louisa, who was a stranger to his pursuits, and nearly so to his character, was instantly struck with the idea that he must have heard of lady Welbrooke's death, or something nearly approaching to it; she rose to meet him with an air of the truest sympathy, and seizing his hand, exclaimed, "My lord! my dear father, what is the matter?"

"Never did Louisa address me with half that true tenderness!" said Edward internally, as he too approached his father, and endeavoured to pay him the attention his appearance called for.

It had been lord Welbrooke's intention to see his son alone, but the kindness of Louisa's manner, and the strong traits of

generosity he had witnessed in her, induced him to feel her presence a support, and encouraged him to hope for her assistance; but he saw by a single glance that her kindness gave a pang to his son, and he felt how unnatural it was that he should be suspected: the horrible developement Edward had once witnessed, rushed to his mind, and again the blush of conscious guilt tingled on his cheek, rendered more painful if possible by the certainty that his son had not revealed his crime, even to the wife so long, so faithfully beloved: he sunk on his chair, he covered his face with his hands, he groaned in convulsive agony.

"Louisa, my dear, this affects you too much," said Edward; "had you not better leave us? I will endeavour to sooth my father."

"No! no!" exclaimed the viscount, seizing her hand, "stay, stay, I beseech you; I need an intercessor; I am lost, ruined, utterly undone, if Edward will not help me."

For a moment he looked in his son's face; it was full of sorrow, but his eyes were bent on the hand which held his wife's, and an air of sternness rarely seen in his mildly benevolent countenance was yet more legible than grief. The viscount cast the hand of Louisa from him. "Oh God! oh God!" cried he, "have I deserved this? Go, child, go—I do not deserve your mediation, but I am not so very a wretch. Oh, no! I am not."

Louisa, terrified, and utterly unable to comprehend this, withdrew; and Edward, deeply penetrated by his father's sorrow, and ashamed of his own intuitive suspicion, tenderly besought him to inform him what was the cause of his distress?

"Can you ask what distresses, what distracts a man whose own conscience tells him that his son dare not trust him with his wife? Oh, Edward, you have humbled me to the very dust!"

The viscount could not have taken a better way to soften and dispose the mind of his son to pity and assist him, than this inci-

dent afforded; and so keenly did he feel for his father's wounds of conscience in this particular, and the severity of those pangs his own conduct appeared to have occasioned, that he was predisposed to think it his duty to lessen every other sorrow by any personal sacrifice; and when his feelings were wrought up to the necessary pitch, the viscount then ventured to inform him that he had lately lost and expended so much money, as to be driven to draw upon him to the amount of several thousand pounds, which, if he refused to, accept, he was utterly undone and disgraced, beyond his power of enduring contempt; since his mother's absence deprived him of the power of raising money on his own estate, and all she had enabled him to receive was gone, ample as he confessed it had been.

"Alas," said Edward, "I have no money: I am, as you well know, a pensioner on my aunt; but I will immediately speak to her."

"Not for the world! she will never for-

give me, and she will withdraw her allowance to you, in order to prevent *you* from assisting me."

Edward thought this very probable; but he saw that something must be done: his father's dread of disgrace was not greater than his own, to which might be added his higher sense of justice. After a moment's thought, he said, "I can borrow the money of Henry; I know he will lend it me with pleasure, but I must wait his answer."

"Oh, no! no! betray me to sir Francis! I will die first; have I not already sunk in his opinion by the deficiency of provision for you?"

"You know not Henry; he will never betray me."

"But I must have instant help, Edward; this very day the bills will be presented; 'tis in vain to deplore, to reproach. I must be assisted now, or lost for ever—yes, *ever*."

Edward shuddered.

"Your wife can do it, Edward; she has

money at command; if you do not choose to ask her for it on other terms, I will give up this house to her: the house is indeed your mother's, but the furniture, the carriages shall be Louisa's."

Trembling and sick at heart, yet anxious at once to relieve his father, and to spare Louisa from the sight of his wild, bewildered countenance, and the terrible suspense she was now enduring, Edward sought her dressing-room, and in as few words as possible, revealed his father's wants and his proposals.

"Surely," exclaimed Louisa, with an air of indignation that repressed her tears, "surely lord Welbrooke has formed a strange idea of me, to suppose that I should accept an equivalent for such an accommodation; pray take the money for any purpose you want—*all* of it; I cannot bear to think you suffer for a single hour from such a cause as that."

In his extreme anxiety, lord Welbrooke had followed his son, and heard the latter part of Louisa's speech; he blessed and

thanked her, with all the fervour of a person delivered from the jaws of destruction; but, whilst Edward likewise thanked her, he felt a degree of cruelty in accepting a loan, which was in fact their only property, and of which it was mean and cruel to deprive her, at a time when both her father and brother being abroad, she had no friend to consult on the occasion: he felt too as if he had less right to her property, because he held not her heart; his pride and his delicacy revolted at the thought of accepting from the *wife*, that which was not granted by the *lover*; the gift of affection is a bond, the boon of pity an obligation.

Yet was there something in the open kindness of Louisa's countenance, the eager tremulousness of her voice, that seemed as if this generosity had an advocate in her bosom beyond the common feeling; and Edward was beginning to dare to hope it might be a softer, warmer sentiment, when his hopes were again destroyed by Louisa, in reply to some expres-

sion of gratitude from his lordship, observing coldly, "that no thanks were due for an act of duty; she regarded her own conduct as claiming no higher praise."

That Louisa should have a higher sense of duty than any other woman, and that she should act up to that sense of it, appeared only a part of her character; but that she should confer on him the tenderest and most lavish gift, *only* from that superior sense of duty, wounded his heart; he felt as if he possessed a matchless treasure, but wanted the key to unlock it: the richer he was, the more poignant was his sense of poverty.

While these reflections pressed on his heart, and saddened his brow, the viscount recovered the tone of his feelings, and gladly accepted the breakfast Louisa now urged him to take; but scarcely had he tasted it, when on the servant saying to Mr. Sefton that a gentleman desired to see him, who refused to send his name, than he again started with every mark of horror in his countenance, exclaiming, "It is Pe-

ters, captain Peters, I am confident." Edward dismissed the servant by saying he would see the gentleman shortly, and then inquired why he thought so?

"Because he came to Bath after me: he had already been in the country; he is seeking his sister, and when he finds her, I need not tell you the consequence; she is, as you well know, incapable of keeping a secret."

"Well, I cannot tell him where she is, for my mother never named the place where she resides to me."

"And from me you are certain she concealed it; but who knows what Ellen may have written to him. I am in agonies."

Edward, shaking in every limb, felt agonized also, as he descended to the honest veteran, who sought an orphan sister, probably to share with her the hard-earned pittance of many a years trying service: he found it was indeed captain Peters, who had, in the first instance, sought his family, to breathe blessings on it for having afforded an asylum to his dear and help-

less relative; but who now, suspicious and apprehensive, came rather to insist upon knowing where she was hidden, and why her residence was unknown. Edward learnt from what he said, that the servants had given hints of her sudden insanity, as the cause why their lady had taken her away, and he felt that it might be wise to confirm the idea; but the full, round drop which coursed down the rough cheek of the affectionate brother, and the convulsive agony of his countenance as he started the idea, rendered it impossible for Edward to confirm a fate so full of horror; and he therefore assured him, that although she was so ill as to render assistance of the highest kind necessary, yet he believed she was now in possession of her senses and her health.

"Yet you know not where she is?"

"Indeed I do not; she is under my mother's especial protection."

"Young gentleman, your mother is, I believe, a good woman; she had doubtless

good reasons for removing my sister from her roof, which, if she concealed from you, does not reflect much credit upon you: doubtless your father knows where she placed her; I am determined to see *him*, and require my sister at his hands, since there can be no doubt but her ladyship would inform her husband."

"He is as ignorant as myself; my mother being independent in her fortune, enables her to provide for those she esteems without consulting his lordship."

"That may be, but good women are never independent in their conduct. I *will* have my sister, if she is alive; and pardon me, I'm no Lavaterian, but your countenance has told me you know more about Ellen than you choose to own. I fear it is easier for you to deceive a young girl than an old soldier: if—if, sir, you *have* wronged Ellen, it is not your wealth, nor the 'honourable' tacked to your name, no, nor the young wife you have taken, that shall screen you from my resentment. I hold the rank of a gentleman, I am the

son of one, and I demand the satisfaction of one."

Edward gave a deep sigh, which dissipated the momentary hectic false accusation had called to his cheek; his features resumed their composure, and looking earnestly in captain Peters's face, he said, "I never injured your sister even in thought."

There is something in the simplicity of truth that generally enables it to carry conviction; the brother believed the assertion, but continued unhappy. Edward gave him an address to his mother, but he persisted in saying "he would see his lordship, as his leave of absence would not permit him to wait the return of a letter from Madeira;" and with this determination Edward was obliged to acquaint his father.

Although London is doubtless the best place in the world for a man to hide in, yet lord Welbrooke could not be prevailed upon to think so, and he determined to leave it

immediately, for he well knew that he could not meet the eye, or answer the interrogatories of captain Peters, of whose sister he had never heard since he saw her, save what his lady had informed him, and, it is probable, but seldom thought, except at those moments when his awakened conscience presented her to his view, a sight which he always shut out as soon as possible.

Unhappy woman, the victim of guilt, may cherish the memory of her seducer, and mingle the tear of love with that of penitence; but the selfish being whose passion consumed her happiness, blighted her hopes, and risked her salvation—he who condemned her name to infamy, her days to obscurity, and her nights to anguish, drops no tear on the sorrow he has caused her, breathes no sigh to the ruin he has made: to him she is a mildewed flower, he deserts and despises, or an accusing spirit, before which he trembles; otherwise she never meets his memory—the seducer feels but for himself.

CHAP. III.

Lord Welbrooke had scarcely left his son's house, when the bills were presented to him for acceptance, and were found to involve more than half of Louisa's fortune, which it was necessary to sell out of the funds in order to meet them; but this was not all. A very few days afterwards, a jeweller, who had by some means heard of his lordship's loss at Bath, and his short mysterious visit to his own house, insisted on payment of his bill, or additional security; and Edward, ashamed of the contents, which he too justly guessed were presents for guilty purposes, gave him his note, and promised early payment, which he was anxious to perform, in order that the demand might never meet his mother's eye. The jeweller boasted of this promise to a wine-merchant, who had by his lordship's order furnished the cellars of the gambler

already alluded to; he waited on Edward with the same petition. Vexed beyond endurance at these accumulated proofs of extravagant folly, or guilty intention, in one whose apparent penitence had softened his heart and confirmed his duty only to betray him, Edward angrily refused; and the consequence was, the threat of an immediate execution in the house, and of course that exposure which, as a son and a man, he alike shrunk from, and the effects of which upon his father he trembled to think of. He knew not what to do; to impose farther on the generosity of Louisa was dreadful; it was nearly equally so to subject her to the threatened evil, especially as she was at present far from well, and he had reason to fear might be injured by any thing that harassed her spirits, since she had already suffered from the alarm lord Welbrooke occasioned her; he could not apply to Mrs. Danvers, for he well knew, that now his mother was absent, she cared not how much trouble befel his father. She could not feel, as he did, that

this guilty man had yet a claim upon him, and that his mother, however injured, would yet require her husband at the hands of her son; he revolved what had been her trials from time to time, from the same cause, and reflected, that with all her meekness of character, and her lavish supplies to his father, she had still so conducted their affairs as to preserve appearances, to uphold credit, and give her lord the consequence due to rank, and necessary to the interests of a rising family; and he was fully aware, that though neglected in her person, and despised in her counsels, she yet had ever held such a degree of latent influence over his father, as to have hitherto preserved him from that ruin into which he had precipitated himself since her absence; and he knew that as a wife and a mother, she never could forgive herself for having forsaken her duties, if on her return she found this universal wreck in his affairs had taken place. He depicted the sorrow and mortification she would suffer; the sickness which would in consequence return upon

her: he beheld the promise of life and health again blasted in her cheek; grief and shame possessing her countenance, and a life of virtuous and incessant struggling succeeded by a death of anguish; his very heart was crushed by the spectacle, and he sunk before the contemplation of a vision, in which reality supplied more miseries than imagination could have depicted.

Under this impression it was impossible that Edward could disguise or restrain his sorrow; anxious as he was to conceal it from Louisa, she perceived that he eat nothing, and that unbidden tears would rush to his eye, while he appeared perpetually solicitous to find some amusement for her, and to escape from her observation. The tenderest pity wrung her heart, yet it was not unaccompanied at times by a sense of offence, a feeling that either he mistrusted her affection, or the strength of her mind; consciousness of the former prevented her from seeking to know the cause of this new sorrow; but in considering the latter, she

perceived, that to be consistent, she must adopt some mode of economy, which should reduce her establishment to the limited income, which she now must consider her sole dependance till her father's return; and as his letters indicated an intention of spending a second winter abroad, she felt herself called upon to provide for at least another twelvemonth.

Perfectly easy as Louisa had ever been, and was ever likely to be, in all money concerns—liberal by nature even to profusion, and too much a woman of taste and talent to turn her mind, without great effort, to the consideration of subjects so utterly ungenial with its pursuits, it was evident how much she was indebted to her father's care, that she could, under any circumstances short of absolute want, make pecuniary concerns the subject of her consideration, and frugality the basis of her action. But in this respect the baronet had been absolute; he had exacted obedience to his precepts, and neither the feelings of benevolence, nor

the desires of taste, had been permitted to warp the sense of justice, nor the conduct of prudence; and his own enlarged mind, tender compassion, and extensive charity, had furnished at once an example, and prevented the possibility of misconstruing his motives when he recommended economy and self-denial. This branch of his wife's knowledge, and this trait in her character, Edward was yet to learn; he knew she was not extravagant, but he knew also, that her heart was "open as day to melting charity," and he could not bear to curtail her pleasures. Ignorant how much remained untold of the troubles in which he was involved, she was yet aware that his apparent distress might arise from his grief at the idea of reducing her comforts, and this prevented her from laying before him those plans on which he had a right to be consulted, lest it should renew the poignancy of his sorrows; and in observing the deep thought which sat on her brow, *he* feared that either she repented her past sacrifice, or feared some coming evil; that

she was not equal to enduring privation of comforts, in addition to the struggle of marrying against her inclination, and that she was reflecting on the hardness of her fate, and arraigning the peculiarity of her misfortunes, which had bereft of joy without even substituting comfort. Thus both were silent—and in the very moment when two hearts, as worthy, tender, and affectionate as ever throbbed in the human bosom, needed most the assistance and consolation of the other, neither could share it, neither could impart or implore it.

Under these circumstances, it was equally the care of each to avoid as much as possible the sight of Emma or Mrs. Danvers; and Louisa, though far from well, and in a situation which called for the attentions of her female friends, exerted herself to go out. One morning, when she returned from an airing, she was met on alighting from her carriage by her maid, who, in a hurried, though respectful manner, took her hand, and entreated her to come immediately up stairs.

"Where is Mr. Sefton, Barnard?" said she alarmed.

"Oh, I trust he is quite safe, ma'am."

"Safe!" said Louisa, with an air of extreme solicitude; "what do you mean by safe? has any accident happened? have any letters arrived?"

"Oh, no; if letters would come, no doubt there'd be an end of all this trouble."

By this time the dressing-room door was shut, and Barnard, with equal feeling and respect, ventured to inform her lady that there was an execution in the house for some debt of lord Welbrooke's.

"But where, where is your master?"

"I don't know," said Barnard, lowering her voice; "but Mrs. Green was sure that some bad-looking men had been a watching of him this day or two; and dear heart, he not being a parliament man, or a lord either, as yet, she was afeard that they might arrest him; and I believe she took the liberty to give him a hint, for you know, ma'am,

she have known him from a child, and loves him past every thing."

After a moment's pause, Louisa starting up, cried, " Oh, where—where can he be? where is my husband ?"

It was the first moment this title had passed her lips; it struck her ear, it vibrated on her heart ; she felt she was a wife; and in being called on for the duties of one, found herself impelled to them by pity and affection: for a few moments she indulged in unrestrained tears, but remembering her father's precepts, she determined to conquer the sensibility which might impede her usefulness, and not add to her husband's affliction by a grief which could not fail to wound him more poignantly than any other misfortune or vexation.

Scarcely had she summoned up resolution necessary for this purpose, when she heard him enter, and instantly dispatched Barnard to bring him to her: anxious as she felt to see him, to save him, her first impulse would have been to throw herself

into his arms, to press him to her heart; but unhappily for both, she considered it necessary to repress her feelings; and though she spoke to him with tenderness, there was an air of calmness in her manners which again presented the idea of a noble, generous being, determinately good, rather than a fond, afflicted, sympathizing wife; and thus Louisa, whose sensibility her father had so strenuously, and, as he feared, vainly endeavoured to curb, only exhibited too much fortitude for her husband's happiness: had he understood her better, her conduct would have shewn itself what it really was; but mistrust had thrown a veil between them, otherwise Edward would have found the hour of sorrow the hour of triumph also; for Louisa's affection would have been cheaply purchased by the price of worlds to him.

It was now, however, impossible to conceal his unhappiness any longer, and she experienced a kind of satisfaction in thus knowing the extent of the evil, since along with other surmises, she could not

help imputing a part of his dejection to a consciousness that she did not love him as she ought. This belief of his freedom from such a cause of suffering, therefore, gave her spirits to give him every species of comfort but one; she assured him, with equal frankness and sincerity, that it was her most earnest wish that he would immediately devote the remainder of her fortune to the liquidation of the jeweller's and wine-merchant's bills, provided it would leave such a sum as might support them during the absence of her father and his mother, both of whom she wished to be kept entirely free from uneasiness on their account. She endeavoured to jest on her own partiality for the romantic and beautiful in country scenery, and declared, "that if he would take her into Wales at this sweet season, she should find nothing to regret in London; and would, in fact, spend her time more agreeably than she could do in any manner, until the return of their mutual friends and parents."

Edward listened to her as a consoling

angel—a philosopher—a heroine; he admired, he adored her. "Oh, why was she not a wife?" a being who, in her love, might find the reward of her virtue; had he dared to think her so, what hours of anguish had been spared to both! but as yet she deemed herself far from a lover; well, therefore, might he still entertain the fears too natural to a heart that "doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves."

Edward in a moment saw many advantages arising from Louisa's scheme, provided she had the courage she assumed of braving its inconveniences, and submitting to so long a seclusion from the society she had so lately enjoyed; he was aware that their removal either to Sefton Hall, his father's house, or even Henry's, would subject them to expences which would continue to involve them, or observations on their contracted style which might at a future period distress their parents, and mortify themselves; besides, at any of those places, they might be still pursued by his father's creditors, and all the horrors of the

present moment occur again; and whilst his heart ached with the idea of reducing the elegant and still-idolized being before him to temporary poverty, he yet shrunk still more from subjecting her to those sudden shocks, aware that his watchfulness and tenderness might guard her from many petty troubles in the first case, but could not possibly save her from essential injury, if she were liable to the second; and he was the rather induced to this, because he perceived that in despite of her struggles to conceal it, yet her nerves were excessively shaken, her whole frame disorganized by the events of the morning.

Under this persuasion, and comforted by the consideration that his mother both could and would restore to his Louisa what he was now compelled to rob her of, he proceeded with a heavy and aching heart to discharge the demand for which the execution was made, and to part with those servants which might be called his own, amongst whom was Barnard, Louisa's maid, whom of course he insisted on re-

taining. To this she assented only in part, as it was her earnest wish to be as much incognito as possible: it was therefore agreed that Barnard should remain with Mrs. Green the housekeeper, to take care of her lady's clothes, dispose of her carriage, and join them at their bidding; and as she was clever with her needle, and could be serviceably employed, this scheme was every way agreeable.

During these arrangements, Louisa experienced a perpetual restlessness on the score of the arrest, feeling that if Edward was parted from her even an hour, she should be wretched; and so much did his present sufferings endear him to her, and so highly did his virtues appear purified by suffering, that she felt as if it would be a profanation she never could forget, a pang she had not strength to endure, that the myrmidons of the law should dare to seize him: the restless and feverish perturbation of her mind displayed itself a thousand ways, but she did not tell him the true cause, lest he should deem her impatient,

or think she presumed to dictate, because she had been enabled to assist; and therefore he was again led to impute the anguish of her heart to distress for misfortunes which she suffered *with* him, rather than to sufferings *for* him, which was actually the case. Such must ever be the state of married people, where every thought and every feeling is not subjected to their mutual examination, especially before they have lived long enough together to know each other's temper, and the extent of their confidence and regard.

The evening of a harrassing day had commenced, when Edward ordered his servant to call a hackney-coach, into which he got for the purpose of settling the only debt he could call his own, though it was become such by adoption. He drove to the Strand, where the wine-merchant lived, leaving Louisa, whose unsettled frame and perturbed spirits seemed to find their only relief in action, packing a small trunk of necessary clothes, and giving Barnard di-

rections to wait on Mrs. Danvers with a message, since she found herself unable to hold a pen, and dared not trust herself to call, lest she should betray more than they had agreed to reveal respecting their sudden journey, and its painful cause. Whilst thus employed, a letter was delivered by a messenger, who said the gentleman who sent it was at a coffee-house, and said it must be read instantly, but required no answer. It was simply directed "Mr. Sefton," and Louisa perceived in a moment that it was the handwriting of lord Welbrooke: with all the foreboding of a mind now shaken with every breeze, she tore it open, and with increased dismay, rather than surprise, saw written with a trembling hand these words—

"Lose not a moment; fly instantly from that cursed house you have endeavoured in vain to save—take Louisa with you. I would say, may Heaven protect your

both! but how can such a father ask a blessing for his son?

WELBROOKE.

"Lose no time, I beseech you; a mere chance enables me to save you from—"

There was not another word, and Louisa was left to all the horrors of conjecture; in the first moment she dreaded lest Edward had even now fallen into the snare, and she now repented not urging him to send, or go to discharge the debt to the wine-merchant many hours before; and resolved at least not to be wanting to him now, she ordered Barnard to procure her a chaise and four, as soon as possible; and taking her mother's letters, some linen for her husband; and the prepared trunk, she was soon seated with Barnard in the chaise, which she ordered to the Strand.

Mr. Sefton had luckily been obliged to wait for the merchant, and he was only leaving the house as the chaise approached. Barnard saw him, and calling to the driver

to stop, alighted, and speaking to him, desired that he would go to her lady, who was in the chaise. He entered in great surprise, and was received with mysterious silence, for the terror of Louisa's mind had become so great, from these reiterated circumstances of a species of uneasiness from which her calm and happy life had been hitherto completely exempt, that had the Bastile, in all its horrors, been opening for her husband, or the grand inquisitor himself in pursuit of him, she could scarcely have been more affected and terrified. During the period in which the chaise was preparing, she had strung up her mind for extraordinary exertion, and felt as if she could have rescued him from the tiger's grasp; but now she beheld him safe, the elasticity of her spirit relaxed, and she sunk overwhelmed and exhausted.

They had got some distance from London before Edward gained the cause of this extraordinary movement; nor could he divine his father's meaning, since he was confident that he had no personal creditor

save the one whom he had just left. As, however, he had really intended to set out in a day or two, and his business was done, except making certain preparations for their intended journey, he could not object to the movement, especially as it evidently rendered Louisa easier than she would have been.

The first stage they stopped at evidently shewed that she was ill; but she so earnestly entreated him to proceed, that he yielded, much against his wishes, to her entreaty, being convinced that whatever had been his father's new errors, there could be no toils so wound around him, as to injure him personally; but Louisa's solicitude was flattering, and she had a right to expect he would yield to her in any point, save what concerned her own health. He soon, however, had cause to repent having accorded with her wishes. Soon after they passed Reading, she became so ill as to desire he would stop the carriage, and in a few moments afterwards she dropt senseless in his arms. He now sincerely repented that he

had not brought Barnard with him, and in extreme distress sent one of the drivers to look for a house. The man soon returned, saying a small farm-house was near, and, with his assistance, Louisa was conveyed thither.

The first words Louisa uttered on recovering from her swoon, was an earnest request that Edward would on no account whatever betray himself; and she expressed herself so well satisfied with the attentions of the farmer's wife, that he was at length induced to give up his plan of sending for Barnard; but an apothecary was indispensible; the distress and agitation of Louisa had produced the effect to be dreaded in her situation, and her flight was necessarily protracted. But if ever pain was soothed, if ever confinement was alleviated by tenderness and attention, surely hers was; for never was human being so watched, so waited on, as she was by her only nurse—her fond, unchanging husband. The agonies in which he gazed upon her in the early part of her illness, could only be

equalled by the assiduities he showed her in the season of convalescence, and hallowed was the dissimulation by which he assumed cheerfulness, when his very heart was sinking with sorrow, in order that he might communicate it to her.

Louisa was deeply sensible, and truly grateful, for his love; but her extreme weakness prevented her from uttering half she felt; and as her strength returned, she was by no means blest with that return of spirits which was naturally expected. A sense of fear, the offspring of nervous affection, pervaded her faculties; health revisited her cheek, but her mind was clouded with melancholy; for this, if no cause had really existed, doubtless the best medical advice would have been resorted to; but as it appeared only too natural that she should regret the comforts she had lost, her husband was not aware of the fact, and therefore even in his kindness nourished the complaint he silently and deeply deplored.

As soon as Mrs. Sefton could travel they again set out, after receiving letters forwarded by Barnard, who did not, in her own, communicate any circumstance that tended to throw light on lord Welbrooke's hasty and, apparently, premature caution; and from this circumstance, it was justly concluded by his son that he had, by some means, learnt that an execution and arrest were threatened, but was not aware that they would, or could, be met in the manner they were; and it afforded satisfaction of the purest nature to Edward, that he had so met them. As the objects on the road were every hour more novel to Louisa, they sometimes excited her attention; but for the most part she continued wrapt in silent dejection, against which she found it vain to struggle, and hopelessly resigned herself to a languor which increased by indulgence. At length they entered Wales, and proceeding northwards, became surrounded by that variety of wild, grand, and beautiful scenery, which characterizes this part of the principality, and which drew

even from the absorbed and listless Louisa expressions of surprise and admiration, and even pleasure.

But although the country was indeed beautiful, the accommodations were so terrible, that Edward despaired of finding even a temporary residence that could be made in any way meet for his wife; and although this was in fact no part of her troubles or her cares, every sigh she gave, every look of despondency she wore, sounded like reproach to his heart, for having, however innocently, subjected her to this increasing trouble. They had now reached the romantic and interesting village of Beth-Gellard, and could have remained comfortably at the little inn there, but from the circumstance of its being ever the place of favourite resort to English tourists, whom they naturally wished to avoid, and whose inquiries it would be impossible to evade.

The room in which they usually sat, like many other small inns, was only divided from the next by a slight wainscot; and

one day, after many successless efforts to engage Louisa in conversation, Edward being sat in silent rumination, like his dispirited partner, they became the unwilling witnesses of a conversation between a portly farmer and a slender female in mourning, whom they had just noticed enter the house, following him, a few minutes before.

"Got pless us!" said the farmer, in a tone of sharp remonstrance, "what talk is this? *I* look over a month or two, indeed! I can do no sich thing! If so be as you can't pay the rent now, why how should you do it then, I wonders?"

"What can I do, sir? this is all the money I can raise in the world."

"Six guineas, and you owe me fourteen!—Why, pless my life! you must sell your furniture, and go out of the house—It is cheap enough; I can get twenty tenants for it."

"But then, sir, what will become of my poor children? I have no other means of providing for them; and indeed, sir, if it

had not been for the measles, which broke up my little school, I should have done very well, and paid my rent to the day."

"I don't pelieve it, Mrs. Morgan—I don't, upon my soul, for when people are *very* poor, they never thrives. Why now you are almost starved to death; you can't deny it; who that looked at you would go to send a child to you to board? No, no; commend me to a fat schoolmistress, in a silk gown and an India shawl; that looks like the picture of plenty; she's the woman for me; I'll lay my life you haven't a boarder left."

"Yes, *one*, indeed; I have *one*, sir; and she will tell you that——oh, sir! indeed I have done my duty; consider my fatherless children."

"Consider me no considerations, Mrs. Morgan; I say you *cannot* do; so the sooner you go the better—Either bring my rent, or leave my house, that's all; can any man say fairer?"

The widow's sobs were audible. Louisa

and her husband had surely but one heart, for they alike started on their feet: their eyes met, and the tears that stood in them were the only language. Edward sprung forward, but checking himself from the recollection of the manner in which he had obtained his information, and fearful of giving pain, even by relief, he called the waiter, and begged to speak with Mrs. Morgan.

In a few minutes she appeared, evidently struggling to conceal recent emotion; they had already learnt from the waiter that she had been the wife of a respectable surgeon, the daughter of a clergyman. Their bosoms sympathized with distress, heightened by circumstances which gave poignancy to poverty.

There was in the pale face and meek courtesy of Mrs. Morgan something at once polished and simple—an air that said she had seen better days; but they had been spent with only the wise and good, among her native mountains, and that she

was conscious that the strangers before her were beings of another class: the manners of both tended to reassure her.

"We are informed," said Edward, "that you had kept a boarding-school, Mrs. Morgan; and we thought it very probable that you could accommodate us for a few months this summer—if desirable, we will engage to be your guests for a year."

"Sir—my lady, I shall be most happy if —but you will first look at my house—the situation is beautiful; but I fear—I fear, madam——"

"I have no fears, Mrs. Morgan," said Louisa, smiling; "I am sure you will make me comforable, and I shall send for my own maid."

"We shall then be three of us," said Edward; "can you manage to keep us for three hundred a-year, with the help of my gun, fishing-rod, &c. &c.?"

"Three hundred a-year, did you say, sir? oh it is far too much!"

"Certainly not; in earnest of our bargain, I will now give you fifty pounds."

The widow burst into tears, and seemed ready to sink. Edward reached her a chair: Louisa, with all the alacrity of recovered strength, poured her out a glass of wine; but she was unable to swallow; her full heart could only vent itself in tears, and thanks to God, who had interposed to snatch her from destruction.

When she was so far recovered as to be able to speak, she begged them to remain three days longer, in order to enable her to provide some few conveniencies, in which she had become deficient, from the necessity of parting with them, in order to procure more bread for her children. "Indeed," added she, "I never could have struggled with my difficulties, but for the young lady, who, ever since she came to me, has been a daughter and a sister to me, and impoverished herself to support me and my babes. When I think on her and you, oh, how can I be sufficiently thankful to God for his mercies! but I owe all to my dear, *dear* Morgan! his goodness brings down blessings, now he is gone.

The widow wept again, but they were tears of tenderness, the offspring of past affection and revived hopes, which now visited her eyes as delightful strangers; and she returned to two promising girls and an infant boy, lovely as a cherub, to gladden their little hearts, to delight her young friend, and to prepare for strangers who appeared to her the delegates of Heaven, and whom she left happier than they had been for many days; for Louisa was revived, Edward relieved; and as they spoke and thought of the widow, their conscious bosoms throbbed in perfect unison.

CHAP. IV.

The house of Mrs. Morgan was five miles distant from Beth-Gellard, and was indeed as beautifully situated as the castle of a fairy queen, in fairy land; and the air of alacrity and interest with which Louisa approached it, seemed a happy omen, when opposed to the cheerless and depressed air she had lately worn: such are the gifts of benevolence to the heart which owns it; "it blesseth him that gives, and him that takes it."

The dwelling was found as perfectly clean and neat, as it was airy and delightful; there was an air of comfort and *propriété* in the arrangement of the old-fashioned furniture, rarely found in any Welch house they had seen, and even a degree of elegance in some of its embellishments; and Louisa remarked the flower-vases on the chimney-piece as the prettiest

boarding-school things she had ever seen; and, "by the way," added she, "they are exactly like some that were in your drawing-room, the first day we visited you."

Edward observed "they were so;" and instantly fell into a profound reverie, from which he did not awake until a pretty girl, about ten years old, entered with the tea-things, followed by her sister of about eight, with the tea-kettle, as bright as gold.

"Well, I am sure we are waited upon by Hebes," said Edward, as he gazed on their rosy cheeks, and remembered the pale ones of their anxious, pining mother.

"No, sir," said the eldest, dropping a curtsey, "Phœbe is our maid."

"Yes," said the second with a violent blush, "we have got her again now, sir—because—because you was so good, sir; we had no maid [illegible] many weeks."

The eldest, in great alarm, seized the arm of her sister, and hurried her out of the room, fearful that she should offend the

quality. Louisa followed them with a smile; children were ever dear to her, and these were so modest, artless, and even grateful, that they already attached her. While she made the tea, and observed how good the cream was, Edward cast on her such looks of tender admiration and esteem, that had she met his eyes, she would have owned such flattering glances dear to a heart now beginning to regain its energies; but she did not observe him until she heard that he had taken up his flute, and was trying it by playing—"Oh Nanny, wilt thou gang with me?" His eyes were full of tears; she felt that those words were in his memory, which seemed to apply to her; and her heart, recalled to feeling, and penetrated by the most perfect esteem and lively gratitude, could truly answer, "I will fly with thee—I do *not* regret the flaunting town;" but as she was on the point of speaking, she perceived his eyes were fixed again in mysterious investigation on the flower vases; a little girl en-

tering at the same moment with some toast, Louisa said, "Pray, my dear, who made those pretty things?"

" Miss Peters, ma'am ; she can do every thing ; she made my frock, and——"

The child was interrupted by an ejaculation of astonishment, that had in it something of terror to Louisa ; she shuddered as if again doomed to those terrible surprises which had of late distressed her so much.

The sight of her disorder led Edward to recollect that he had never yet announced his name, having purposely avoided it at the inn, and fearful that the sight of him might so embarrass Miss Peters, as to alarm those around her, and excite extraordinary suspicion ; he said to the child, " Will you tell Miss Peters that Mr. Sefton admires them very much, and Mrs. Sefton too."

" Yes, sir, I'll be sure to remember ; Sefton, Sefton."

" Aye, Mr. Sefton ; that's right."

A long pause ensued—the sweet emotions so lately playing round Louisa's bo-

som ceased their vibration; she had experienced a shock, which was followed by a mystery; this threw her back on her own concealments, and though she owned that she had no right to complain, yet she felt it impossible not to be uneasy; her disordered nerves again were unstrung, and irritation added to lassitude.

Edward saw the change, and felt that Louisa had a right to know why he had thus announced himself to a stranger; but he could not resolve to inform her of a circumstance which would place his father in a point of view in which she had never yet seen him, and in which he knew she would abhor him; nor could he, under such a development, permit Miss Peters to approach her; in fact, he considered that in doing it, he must banish from a suitable and highly commendable retirement a sincere penitent, who had evinced a due sense of her guilt, and most admirably devoted herself to the best purposes of life; whereas he felt aware, if considered innocent and respectable, her ac-

complishments would make her a desirable companion, and her obligation to his mother an assiduous attendant to Louisa: he was well aware that if he told her the whole truth, however shocked she might be, she would, from the very gentleness of her nature, forgive her. But would sir Francis deem this right? could he himself deem it so? certainly not! the victim of a young man's arts may be pardoned, but the sharer of a married man's guilt can only be pitied. The case of Miss Peters, too, was aggravated by his mother's kindness, and his sister's friendship; the more he thought, the more he found it impossible to admit her into the presence of his wife.

All night long Edward pressed a sleepless pillow, nor was this circumstance unnoticed by his wife, who was little better able to taste the sweets of repose. In the morning the breakfast was brought in by Phœbe, whose broad, flat face, and Welsh dialect, would have amused them at any other time, but was to the diseased mind, sickened by disappointment and vexation,

disgusting; Edward inquired of her what had become of little Nancy?

"Hur be preaking hur art, Lort love hur."

"What is the matter?" said Louisa, whom nothing less than compassion could have roused to a question.

"There be Miss Peters a going, an they do all take on so, hur thinks as how 'twill be th' deth o' sum on um, hur does."

Edward's cheek glowed, and a tear glistened in his eye, while words of half-uttered praise broke from his lips; it was evident that he rejoiced in her departure, and this encouraged Louisa to say,

"It seems you know this Miss Peters; indeed I think I have heard her name; surely she was your sister Emily's governess?"

"Yes, she was; I knew little of her myself, because I was at Oxford."

"That little has made an impression on you, however," said Louisa, rising with an air of pique.

Edward felt his face glow, and was aware

that his manners were constrained, but he had no idea that his appearance could have so far moved Louisa for a moment; he asked himself, "if it were possible that she should be jealous?" but he despairingly answered, "no, no;" and as Louisa returned into the room with an air of calmness, the decision was confirmed.

During Louisa's absence she had seen Mrs. Morgan, who had confirmed Phœbe's report; and with all the ingenuousness of her character and country, declared, "that she was sure it was the arrival of Mr. Sefton that had occasioned her young friend to fly; but she said, that she had told her he was the very best gentleman that ever was born, and the son of a lord, and that his mother was as good as himself; and somehow she said so much," continued the good woman, "that my heart misgives me whether she [illegible] at some time been in love with him herself; and so finding him married, like a prudent, good girl, which I am sure she is, has taken herself away."

Louisa really thought this solution furnished a key to all the changes in her husband's countenance, and she accepted it accordingly; but she could not help enquiring if she was pretty?

"Oh, yes, ma'am, a sweet pretty creature, only pale and thin with fretting, which she always told me was after her parents; but you see, ma'am, murder will out; I don't believe any body ever concealed a love affair during their whole lives."

"Where is she gone, Mrs. Morgan?"

"That she forbade me to tell."

"She would not wish Mr. Sefton to know, of course, but she could not object to me."

"Ah, madam, there are not many secrets, I dare say, between you two," said the widow mournfully; "I know how things stand with happy couples in that respect."

Louisa returned to her husband; she was easy, and she looked so, in the only moment of his life when he had wished to see

her troubled, when he believed that she suspected him, yet did not grieve over her suspicion.

Alas, poor Edward!

The weather was delightful, and in wandering round the neighbourhood, and inhaling the pure breezes from the mountains, Louisa daily recovered the tone of her spirits, and the power of extending her rambles; nor was she a little indebted to the skill of Mrs. Morgan, who was a woman of sound understanding, and excellent memory, and was no bad judge of those lesser ailments which require the aid of kindness and good nursing. She was a plain, but excellent cook, and the simple table at which they now dined, was rendered by exercise a luxurious board; nor were they unable to procure some intellectual amusement, for they had received a package of books and drawing materials from town; and there was an old piano-forte in the house, which Mrs. Morgan had purchased for the use of her pupils; so exactly did their tastes and opinions accord

on every subject, that they frequently smiled at the circumstance; and Louisa thought on her father's assertion, that they were made for each other—an assertion the truth of which every hour seemed to confirm: but so strongly had she once felt persuaded that her heart could never own another lord save Donald, that although she could not help rejoicing that his image had ceased to intrude upon her, because she felt it a sin against her wedded lord, yet she scarcely thought it consistent to allow that another really supplied his place; and as it was not possible for her to feel precisely the same palpitations and fears which had filled her heart for one she was forbidden, she was apt to conclude that she did not hold him equally dear, though sensible that he stood far higher in her estimation.

Of one circumstance that looked like love, she was, however, painfully certain; the absence of Edward was ever excessively irksome to her, and neither her books, works, nor music, could beguile the

time; yet she never felt that want of general society which she had expected she should, and which he apprehended she did; he never left her but for the purpose of increasing their little stock of pleasures, either by procuring her books, or exploring unknown paths, visiting some distant object of charity, or purchasing some delicacy not easily procured; but had he known how much he was missed, he would certainly have procured a substitute for all his expeditions.

At an early period of their arrival in Wales, Louisa had been sensible that however possible it was for her to submit to her present situation, yet the same possibility by no means extended to Barnard, and as she had no longer the necessity which existed when she set out, she deferred from time to time sending for her, though sensible of the want of a servant, especially as the little girls went away every morning, to what they called school, but what she imagined was the abode of Miss Peters, who still continued her kind

instruction to them, since they appeared reconciled to her loss, but were evidently cautioned against mentioning her name. Phœbe, though well meaning, was so very *outré*, that it was impossible to claim her services in personal attention, and Mrs. Morgan was so very respectable, as to render it equally difficult.

" I have seen a very nice-looking girl, that might, I think, be useful to you," said Edward one day, " but when I spoke to her, she ran away affrighted; perhaps if you could see her yourself, your voice might tame her."

" I have little hope of that; I conclude my words would only meet the usual '*din sassenic*,' by way of answer; but I can go and look at *her* as well as any other curiosity; I cannot fail of finding pleasure in my walk."

As they passed on, they met two gipsey women, who earnestly entreated them to have their fortunes told. Edward gave them a shilling, but would not listen to their prophecy. " I believe," said he, " that

line of Pope's made an unusual impression on me from a boy, 'Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate,' for I have always felt unusual horror at the idea of unfolding even a single page of it."

"So have I," returned Louisa; "it is one of the subjects on which I could not practise a jest."

"Pretty Missey," said one of the women, "you've a bin crossed in your inclinations; but show me your hand, and I'll tell you when your sweetheart will come back."

"A pretty decisive proof," said Edward, "of astrological powers; it seems matrimony has not set its mark on your brow, Louisa."

But Louisa felt her cheek glow, with some mark traced by memory or modesty, and she hurried on, fearful of hearing more, leading the way over the rugged declivity of a mountain, till a narrow pathway was found entering a beautiful little glen, when the women being completely out of

sight, she stopped, evidently out of breath and fatigued, and took her husband's arm.

"Go a little farther, my dear, and I will find you a beautiful seat on a little knoll, which I remarked yesterday, under a weeping birch; you have indeed an aversion to fortune-telling; you fly from it as if an adder had crossed your path." Louisa blushed still deeper.

At this moment they perceived this very knoll had been taken possession of by the gypsies, whose materials for a tent, and their utensils for cooking, were laid by the side of it, and under the birch tree were two children, of about four or five years old, laid fast asleep; at a little distance a girl of twelve years old sat watching them; her long dark hair fell matted over her shoulders and her forehead; and she was literally clothed in rags, and completely barefooted, whereas the women they had met were decently dressed, and the sleeping children bore no appearance of want; as they remarked this, the girl whose back

was towards them, first learned that somebody was near her, and stroking back her hair, she turned towards them a face of uncommon beauty, notwithstanding the dirt by which it was disfigured, and the almost idiotic apathy of its expression.

"This girl is not a gypsey," said Edward; "her hair, though dark, is not black; she is so tanned and dirty, one cannot judge from her complexion; but her eyes and features are different from any I have ever seen; they are certainly a very distinct race of people; like the Jews, they never can be mistaken."

"Speak to her, we shall learn more by her voice."

"By her voice we may, but not by her answers; young as she is, she is doubtless initiated in the art of equivocation, which is the very soul of fortune-telling."

"Are you the daughter of either of the women we met?"

"No."

"Do you belong to them?"

"Yes."

"How came you to belong to them?"

To this question there was no answer, and Edward observed that he had been mistaken in conceiving the girl an adept; though apparently stupid at first, yet the anxious looks she cast around, and which were darted from dark hazel eyes of no common brilliance, as she answered their interrogatories, indicated fear; and he thought her silence might proceed from apprehension of the gypsies' return, to whom she was probably a servant; he felt interested for a young creature thus enslaved to the vicious, and at an age when she stood on the confines of new crime, and deeper degradation. "It is a shocking thing," said he, "to see a human being in a state so deplorable; I do not think her apparent stupor proceeds from want of intellect; who knows what she may have suffered."

"It is dreadful to think of; so pretty too, so very pretty." Louisa spoke as if an automaton were before her; but the

spark of vanity was not dormant even in this lost child; she again shook back her locks, rose, and folding her hands over the bundle of rags that enfolded her, dropt no ungraceful curtsey to the lady.

"Tell me, my good child, how long you have lived with the gypsies?"

"Ever since I ran away."

"And where did you run away from?"

She hesitated, and looking suspiciously at Mr. Sefton, he retired to some distance, when whisperingly she said, "If I tell you, will you take me back?"

"Certainly not, if you don't wish to go."

"Well then, I'll tell *you*, but don't tell *him*; I ran away from the workhouse, because the new master beat me so for crying; 'tis a long time since now, and I never cry, *no*, never—neither for beating nor starving."

Louisa shuddered as she inquired, "Why did you cry then?"

"Because my granny was dead: who

used to love me, and I loved her; and sometimes I love her yet."

"And who is good to you now, and loves you?"

"Nobody but little Bill; that's he—I nursed him ever since he was born; she took me for that, and I go a-begging with him."

"Have you no mother, no father, child?"

"I never had no father, and granny said my mother died before I could run; so I was put in the workhouse, and granny nursed me, and taught me to say prayers, and knit, and read the Testament, and speak proper."

"It was a sad thing that you came to these wicked people, child!"

"I was almost starved to death when they found me, and they fed me *then*, and was good to me; yes, they was."

"But they are not good now, I fear?"

The girl slipped one shoulder from under its miserable covering, and discovered bruises which spoke more than words.

Louisa cast her eyes imploringly towards her husband, as she cried, "Look here! oh, how dreadful!" but the child, with a mixture of instinctive modesty and fear, instantly replaced her covering, and was again shy and silent.

"I must save this child, indeed I must," said Louisa, "at least I must do something for her."

"And why not every thing, my dear Louisa, that your heart wishes for? we are not so poor as to—I have not reduced you to——"

"Dear Edward, I was not thinking of *that*; but it is certainly rather an imprudent thing to take a child from people proverbially wicked; and perhaps, if we dare trust her, Mrs. Morgan may not think her a safe inmate: but since you think it right, I could really wish to try.—What is your name, my girl?"

"Sally Dixon," said the child, eagerly adding, "and they called my mother Sally Dixon, I believe, lady, for granny said so;

we belonged to the parish of Chapelrick, near the city of Bristol, once."

The rapidity with which this was uttered clearly proved that either the person she called granny had taught her to repeat it by rote during her infancy, or the gypsies had made it a part of her begging story; and the idea of her being thus initiated in falsehood for a moment checked the warm flow of charity in their hearts towards her; but Edward considered that the greater was her danger, the greater was the call for assistance; while Louisa, in despite of the whispers of her judgment, felt it impossible to abandon the idea she had formed of saving her: as she stood meditating what to do, the girl perceived a gypsey returning, and entering the glen, though yet at a considerable distance; for the first time she ventured to address Edward, who was at that moment returning his handkerchief into his pocket, saying, in a voice of hurry, and almost terror, "Please to keep it in your hand, or else, sir——"

"Your mistress will steal it, I suppose?"

"No, sir, not that, but——"

"But what? speak the truth, my good girl," said Louisa anxiously.

"She will beat me again for not taking it."

Louisa shuddered with streaming eyes.

"If I beg you of your mistress for this lady, and take you to a good house, and give you clothes and victuals, will you wait on this lady, and do as your granny taught you, and be good always, Sally?"

It was evident she dared not answer, for the woman approached, and as she drew near, she began in a canting tone, and, with her original vacancy of countenance, to beg.

"I have taken a fancy to this girl," said Mr. Sefton to the gypsey, whose rights over her he had no inclination to dispute; "will you part with her to me?"

"Lord love your honour, what did your honour think of giving for her? she's a fine girl as ever sun shone on."

"I wonder you did not clothe her bet-

ter, being so fine a girl; she is a bundle of rags."

"Lord love your honour, she is a natural, or little better; 'tis no use giving her any thing."

"Well, I will give you a guinea for her."

"Oh, five, your honour! I wouldn't take less from my own father; consider I found her starved, and beaten, and dying, and I saved her, and reared her till now, and made her what she is, your honour; she has me to thank for every thing."

To look at the poor child and consider her state, rendered this appeal ludicrous; and Edward could scarce forbear smiling, as he held out two guineas, which were gladly accepted, and the astonished girl beheld herself transferred in a way very different to the usual negociations respecting property, in the tribe to which she had lately belonged.

When told to accompany her new mistress, on whom she looked as a being of a superior order, though conscious of the

mighty change in her favour, the only affection her young heart had yet known to cheer her many miseries, at once checked her hopes, and suspended her steps. "Shall I leave Bill? and shall I never see him again?" cried she, hastening to the child, and clasping him eagerly in her arms; he awoke and kissed her, she burst into tears, and looking towards Louisa, seemed almost to say, "she could not leave him;" but the angry voice of his mother instantly aroused her, and having once more fondly embraced him, she hastened to follow her lady, whom she approached rather as an inferior animal prepared to obey her will, than a rational creature disposed to yield grateful obedience.

But when she entered the tidy kitchen of Mrs. Morgan, and the manner in which she was obtained was related, not all the good woman's gratitude, and her sense of dependance on the young couple, could prevent her from remonstrating on the ut-

ter impossibility of receiving such a filthy and improper guest, one who would teach her children to lie and steal, and probably open her doors to the vagrants with whom she had so long associated. Although neither Mr. nor Mrs. Sefton could bring themselves to this belief, yet they felt that Mrs. Morgan's fears as a mother were excusable; and they respected that principle in her, which refused to risk the contamination of her children's minds for any temporary good. Far from regarding her prejudices as insults they had a right to resent, they sought only to reconcile her to a species of benevolence which they had reason to believe as inherent in her mind as theirs, and to make her feel herself their coadjutor in an act of Christian kindness towards a being so deplorably situated. In a short time she became so far reconciled as to allow her admittance, and even to assist Phœbe, who was thoroughly good-natured, in making this poor outcast an admissible guest; and long before her ablutions were performed, tears of pity

had streamed over the wounds of the helpless orphan from the eyes of the sympathizing widow, who became only the more anxious to benefit her, from the consciousness, that she had opposed her entrance, and who listened to her sad story with all the interest of fellow-suffering.

Sally Dixon, nearly shorn of her matted locks, dressed in a tidy cap of Mrs. Morgan's, and a cotton gown of her late boarder's, with hands and face perfectly clean, was so different a creature to the little gypsey girl, that scarcely could Louisa believe she was her *protegée;* she remarked, that although a pretty, dark-eyed girl, she was not so handsome as she gave promise of being; and that she resembled a cultivated mountain, which in attaining utility, loses the magnificent wildness which gave grandeur to barrenness, and interest to deformity.

"But as we want her to be useful and happy, good and agreeable, we can spare these wild graces very well. I am much pleased with her appearance; there is some-

thing in her face that seems familiar to my eye; and her voice is so much so, that I can hardly believe her to be a stranger; I promise myself that she will be as great a comfort to you, as you will undoubtedly be a blessing to her."

Nor were these hopes ill-founded; Sally was obedient from habit, and docile from nature; and finding herself ever kindly treated, and her little blunders and ignorancies neither followed by blows nor oaths, she soon conquered that terror, which rendered her apparently stupid; whilst she imbibed such a sense of gratitude towards her benefactors, and of happiness in her altered circumstances, as to render her a subject of delightful contemplation; but such was her dread of falling again into the hands of the gypsies, who she doubted not would strip her of her clothing, and treat her worse than ever, that she scarcely ever ventured beyond the precincts of the garden, unless in company with Phœbe.

Ever actively benevolent, Louisa did not disdain to revive the lessons of her

granny in the mind of Sally, whom she taught to read and write, observing, that until she could be trusted safely, it would be certainly better to keep her out of the way of the little girls; but their brother, who was scarcely turned three years old, was the substitute of poor Bill to the affectionate heart of Sally; with him she was more easy than any other inhabitant of the house, because more equal, as she conceived, in point of knowledge, and because he could not despise her for having been either the inhabitant of a workhouse, or the associate of a gang of gypsies, both of which rendered her amenable to the contempt of even Phœbe and her companions; little Charles was by this means brought more into the notice of Mrs. Sefton than he had ever been, and as he was the first child with whom she had ever lived, it was no wonder that he became a most engaging object of attention. He was a fair and ruddy boy, the darling of his widowed parent, and just enough of a pet to be free without being troublesome, against which the anxious

mother was continually guarding. Edward was delighted with him, as he was not only his constant plaything in the house, but ever hailed his return to it with that unconstrained and genuine expression of joy and welcome, which is so dear to the heart; yet would it often awaken a sigh for his own disappointment, and he would inwardly ejaculate, "Louisa's child would have loved me at least."

So much had Louisa recovered her spirits of late, and so reconciled had she appeared to the change of situation she experienced, that an indifferent observer, who saw that she was not only tranquil, but that her countenance ever brightened at the approach of her husband, that *his* judgment, *his* taste, *his* opinions, guided hers, would have justly concluded that their affection was mutual, or, perhaps, that it was even more strongly felt on her side. But Edward unhappily had learnt to doubt, and the ardour of his own feelings been contrasted by the coldness of hers; yet such was the undeviating propriety of her man-

ness, such her high sense of duty, and so great his esteem and admiration of her character, that he considered her capable of more than ever woman was, and believed that she could cheerfully submit to sacrifice what are generally considered the charms of life, and embrace solitude and comparative poverty with pleasure; though a man to whom she was indifferent was the sole cause, and the sole companion of her retirement.

CHAP. V.

Sweet are the occupations of benevolence, delicious the tears of compassion; and such were they found by Louisa, as she listened to the sad stories of poor Sally, "when she did speak of some disastrous stroke which her youth suffered," or when she imbibed from a mistress she almost adored instructions which she bound "even to her heart's core." It was now the very height of summer, and Louisa was much oppressed by the heat, so that she was obliged to keep the house during the middle of the day, and she had therefore pleasure in the society of the little boy, and employment in giving instruction to her little maid. Nor when deprived of her husband's society did she disdain that of Mrs. Morgan, who, though confined in her views, had much good sense, and whose erudition, though small, was useful, and even agree-

able to a young woman of Louisa's character and education; for she was well read in her Bible, and possessed knowledge connected with, and illustrative of, the divine writings, which often placed passages and characters of holy writ in a new and interesting point of view. There was something delightful in marking the effect of this divine instruction, and the pure faith it awakened upon the mind of one who had suffered all the agonies of bereaved love, and all the sorrows of severe poverty, as a widowed mother, yet had still trusted, hoped, prayed, and toiled for her little ones, as one whose afflictions were given for her good, and who now rejoiced under a partial assistance, as the earnest of greater help from the same holy source, whom she was fully persuaded had accorded it to her faith and her supplications.

Gratitude to man is a delightful sensation, but it is too frequently blended with pain, either from the error of the giver or the receiver; but gratitude to God is unmixt joy, unsullied tranquillity; and

although the pangs of memory would frequently recur, and the widow's eye be suffused with tears of fond regret, yet the general expression of her countenance was so gently calm, so benignantly happy, that Louisa never looked upon it without feeling a species of support. This support she more literally experienced as time advanced, for Mrs. Morgan was a skilful nurse, a kind consoler in every little ailment, and seemed almost a substitute for her mother —that mother, so fondly beloved, so far distant, for whose return she often sighed, but of whose absence she had entirely ceased to complain, lest it should wound the feelings of her husband, since the return of her parents would be doubtless the return of those conveniencies he might suppose she regretted—a supposition natural, although unfounded.

During the evenings of August, Edward generally conducted Louisa into the little glen, where they had found Sally, and which, from its shadiness and beauty, and its being the haunt of the feathered race,

was particularly dear to her. He had in several parts constructed little rustic seats for her, and sometimes would read, at others take his flute to amuse her. One evening, when they had trod the grass in perfect silence, listening to the evening song of the thrush, Louisa was surprised by a female voice, which at no great distance, and with a voice of enchanting sweetness, but some peculiarity of accent, sung the beautiful air of Moore's, beginning—"Fly not yet," &c.

Astonished, she listened in profound silence, casting her eyes around in vain for the invisible songstress, when the words "stay, oh stay!" were pronounced with such a tone of peculiar harmony and tenderness, as to charm her, and she turned to see if Edward partook her admiration.

His face was scarlet, but in a moment became pale; he was not, like her, subject to blushing, nor, except when his father was named, wont to wear a look of confusion; what could she think of this? The evening before she had

been so troubled with a headach, as to be obliged to lie down; the same circumstance had occurred twice the week before, yet she understood he had generally taken the same walk—Surely this was Miss Peters! and was it not probable that he had met her? or had her former passion returned? and was her virtue not proof against her wish to fascinate him by powers so extraordinary?

It was evident that he was affected by what he heard, and that in the emotion legible on his ingenuous countenance, there was an expression of dread which was undefinable, save by supposing that he was alarmed lest she should discover how much he was interested in the unseen lady. His action fully corresponded with this idea, for he involuntarily stopped, as their steps seemed leading them to discovery, then turned round, although they had not been out half their usual time, and in silence pursued the path homeward.

Every person who has lived in a secluded situation in the country, is aware how

much every trifle that breaks on the calm monotony of life becomes a subject of conversation, and an excitement to curiosity. Edward and his lovely consort had lived long enough in Wales to look out of the window at the butcher's boy, and perceive the smart bonnet of the farmer's wife; yet an incident, really singular, and completely novel, excited not a single remark; it rested on the hearts of each too deeply to find its way to the tongue; neither of them slept all night; and Louisa was evidently so much indisposed the next day, that Mrs. Morgan felt no surprise that the squire (as she called him) never once took up his fishing-rod, or left his lady for a single moment.

This conduct confirmed Louisa in the idea that it was Miss Peters whom she had heard, and she gave her husband the credit he so justly deserved, especially when, on the following morning, on her observing he did not look well, for want of his usual exercise, he answered, "I will ride over to Caernarvon, and see if the bookseller has

got 'The Giaour' as he promised; and I will order a chaise for to-morrow, that you may take a longer airing than you have had lately, my dear."

Both these designs were accomplished, and the glen was not visited, and Louisa thought more highly of her husband than even before she had been thus alarmed; but who is always wise? Edward had soothed his own fears, almost persuaded himself they were in part groundless; but he had a little curiosity to know how they had been excited; and one evening, when the moon had risen with unusual splendor, and Louisa regretted that she was already too much fatigued by her evening walk to go out again, or she would have done it, for the purpose of seeing the moonbeams fall on some fine masses of rock which they had admired under the same radiance the month before, he replied to her by saying, "I will run and look at them, while you sit at the window, my dear; you will be aware how the clouds which overshadow the face of this lovely

orb cast their broad shadows on the rocks and foliage when I am there."

He darted away, and Louisa continued looking upwards; but as she recollected that these very rocks formed a part of the glen, she wished that, notwithstanding her fatigue, she had accompanied him thither, and would have followed, had not Mrs. Morgan remonstrated.

She thought he never would return; she was convinced that something of an extraordinary nature must have detained him. It could not be the moon, for, in her opinion, there was no particular beauty in the evening; yet she continued to gaze upon it as if it were a mirror, in which she could see what Edward was doing, or hear to whom he was listening.

Mrs. Morgan had brought in the slight refreshment which was their usual supper, and Louisa declared she was ready to die with hunger; but when pressed to eat by the good woman, she found it impossible to taste any thing; and at length Mrs. Morgan herself allowed that his honour did

make it rather latish, yet with a harvest moon over his head, and such a many beautiful things about him, it was no wonder he liked to ramble a bit. Poor Miss Peters used to walk, by moonlight for hours and hours.

"And she used to sing, did she?" asked Louisa, in breathless agitation, and angry with herself the moment after.

"No, ma'am, I can't say she did; at least I never heard her."

"But she has a very fine voice?"

"As to that, she can join in the Evening Hymn; but that is all. Either of my little girls, though I say it, sing much better than her—She understands it, but she has no voice."

For the only time in her life, Louisa was tempted to believe that Mrs. Morgan deceived her. She arose impatiently, and went into the garden; but had scarcely reached the wicket-gate which enclosed it, when she espied Edward advancing towards it, and she instantly went out to meet him. Such were her first emotions of

joy, that she felt, as before, ready to clasp him to her breast; but the idea that he had been listening to the singer, perhaps seeing or searching for her, overshadowed her mind before she reached him, and the only words she uttered were merely, "You have been very long, Mr. Sefton."

"I fear I have," was the only reply; but it was uttered in a tone of such despondency, as to check either reproach or inquiry; and the moon just then passing through a cloud, prevented all observation on his countenance. He did not, on entering, either taste his supper, or, as he was wont, relate his observations on the subject that had attracted him. His face was pale, and his countenance troubled; he had never worn so much distress in his features since the time of her illness, and it was mingled with much of that vexation that marked it when under the influence of his father's errors.

When Louisa came down the following morning, she found her husband reading

a note, which, on her appearance, he hastily put aside, and soon after inquired whether she found herself inclined to ride again, as he would himself fetch her a chaise? There was something in the manner of this request which impressed Louisa with the idea that he wanted an excuse for going out, or in some way avoiding her eye, for the same embarrassment still hung about him. She declined the proposal, but said somewhat faintly, "But do not let that prevent *you* from going out."

Edward rose, as if he were about to avail himself of the permission instantly, as if there was a perturbation within which he must hide from every eye, or a distaste to the house that he could not conquer. He had never exhibited such a sensation, even for a moment, since the period of their marriage, and this thought struck tears into the eyes of Louisa. Anxious to hide her emotion, she put her hand into her work-box, and taking out a miniature of Henry, painted when he first went abroad, she looked earnestly at it, and fancied she

had an excuse in wiping away the drops awakened by jealousy, as she ejaculated, "Poor Henry! if Chalon painted you now, he would find you much altered."

"Not for the worse," said Edward, who, like his Louisa, found the picture afford him some relief; "not for the worse, certainly—By the way, the very first thing you do, on our return to town, shall be to sit to Mr. Phillips; I spoke to him about it, you know, and——"

"I have no inclination, and it will be no disappointment to him; numbers will supply my place gladly."

"But it will be a great disappointment to *me*."

Louisa looked full in Edward's face; not the shadow of deception met her eye.

"You know," continued he, "that when you saw his picture of the watch, you were enchanted with it, and said no one understood the female form, expressed the female mind, so well as him, and I went immediately to——"

"I will [illegible]it," said Louisa, smiling at his eagerness, and wondering how she could for a moment have suspected him.

Edward saw her returning confidence with pleasure, but he felt his heart too ill at ease to support conversation; yet he was determined not to re-tread any of his usual haunts; he therefore proposed walking over to Beth-Gellard, on which she immediately said, "I wish you would, for I will take Mrs. Morgan's arm, and meet you half way on your return."

"Pray do," said Edward, with a gay air, as if his heart was lightened of a burthen, and in thus seeming, *her* heart was really lightened; and soon after he set out, she went to the old instrument, and began to recall her own powers of song, and went with very little difficulty even through the alarming "Fly not yet."

Three days had passed, and yet Edward was not himself, and Louisa began to think that something had been heard from his father, tending to distress him, which he con-

cealed from her, and which afflicted him by threatening disgrace, or a protracted stay, which she knew he was anxious to avoid on her account; when, in the evening of a day which had been showery, and confined her to the house, she was surprised by the sudden entrance of Sally, who all at once dropped down on her knees before her, and begged her "for God's sake not to give her up!"

"Give you up, child! what do you mean?"

"Oh, madam! oh, dear lady, don't!—pray don't!" said she, looking tremblingly through the window, as if she expected some one in pursuit.

"What are you alarmed at, child? there is nobody coming; have you seen any gypsies?"

"Oh yes; that's it! I saw one talking to master under the bushes; she was a-telling his fortune, I suppose; but I am afraid too that she was a-begging and praying for me."

"Pshaw, child! have I not told you

many times that fortune-telling was very wicked? and therefore you are certain your master would not have his fortune told—perhaps he was giving her something."

"Oh no!" cried the child, shuddering, and bursting into tears; "if she was not telling his fortune, she was begging for me, for she pulled his hand just so, and she looked up in his face, quite miserable, as it were, and she didn't want money; she was like a lady, but only a gypsey, for all that."

"A lady and a gypsey, how can that be?"

"Oh, ma'am, her eyes and her hair are black as sloes; and though she is not quite brown, yet she is not white, like you and Miss Peters; and I take it she is the queen of the gypsies that they used to talk about."

"When did you see Miss Peters, child?"

"Oh, ma'am, she came here the day you went out in the chaise, and staid till it was almost dark."

Louisa sent the child away, assuring her they should never take her away; and to sooth her mind, desired Phœbe to lock

the doors; but having made this effort, she sunk into her chair trembling and bewildered. The real distress of the child proved that she could not be mistaken, and her artless description of the looks and attitude of the real or supposed gypsey, though it partly tended to exonerate Edward from the guilt of a criminal attachment, yet seemed to prove that he held meetings which authorized suspicion—Perhaps the poor wretch whom Sally so emphatically described as begging and praying, was already the victim of lawless passion, and, —"Oh, impossible! impossible!" cried every power within her; "Edward never can, never will be a seducer—to think it were an act of sacrilege." Yet what to think, or how to control the terrible fears which shook her frame and tore her mind to very agony, she knew not; yet never had she been so anxious to conceal her feelings as now, not only from her husband, but Mrs. Morgan; and aware that it would be otherwise impossible to hide them, she called Sally to assist her; and

pleading indisposition, went to bed, though sensible that sleep had fled her eyes, she could almost have fancied for ever, so rapid was the whirl of her thoughts, so various the torments she endured, and the terrible suspense that racked her.

When Mrs. Morgan informed Edward at his return that his lady was gone to bed, being suddenly indisposed, his countenance sunk into such a look of despondency, not unmixed with alarm, that the truly kind hostess took abundance of pains to convince him that her ailment was quite natural and temporary, and that a good night's rest would quite set her up again; and hoped his honour would make as little noise as possible, lest he should disturb her. This was a welcome hint to both, for Louisa, though unable to calm her beating bosom, had closed her eyes, and Edward, who could not wish to see them gaze on him, from that circumstance was saved from the necessity of speaking, even to make these kind inquiries his compassion would have prompted. In his heart

sleep was for this night as effectually murdered as it was in the bosom of his wife, who lay cogitating and considering on all the past, and trembling for the future in all the horrors of that alternate fear and ague which torture the jealous, and which, to be known, must be felt, since even the language of our immortal bard, from the lips of Kean himself, would fail to produce a corresponding sympathy if it were addressed to a heart incapable of estimating his pangs—"who hopes, yet doubts—suspects, yet strongly loves."

Louisa, in this respect, laboured under a disadvantage not frequently experienced by so young a wife; she learnt the extent of her own affection only by the pains she experienced, and in retracing the progress of that faithful affection Edward had so long evinced for her, she could not sooth her sorrows by that doctrine so dear and so common to youth, that "the heart never loves but once," since she was herself a proof to the contrary, and was compel-

led to charge herself with this violation of sentimental purity, at the only moment when it could not contribute to her happiness, and relieve her from the dreadful consciousness of being an unmatched wife.

CHAP. VI.

OUR readers will doubtless have perceived that Edward had heard in the voice of the unknown syren that of Antonia, and will not be surprised at the following circumstances.

When Edward left Louisa, as he said, to view the effects of the moonbeams on the rocks, he told her true; but it was likewise his intention to run down the glen, at the other extremity of which there was a cluster of cottages, and to make inquiries of such as could answer him, whether any person answering her description had been seen in their precincts, intending, if he found her unaccompanied, to avoid her by every means in his power. He stood for a time upon a little acclivity, sometimes gazing on the moonbeams, at others reverting to the more interesting object of his curiosity, and considering the utter improbability

of such a visit, almost persuaded himself to return without further inquiry. "Yet," added he to himself, "if it is not Antonia, it may be some elegant female, like ourselves, under a temporary cloud, whose society might be valuable to us, and to whom ours might prove an acquisition." He descended, and in doing so, thought another shadow beside his own spread from beneath the rock; yet all was silent; still he was convinced some one was near. The shadow was that of a woman; either it must be the stranger, or Louisa; and as the latter had expressed a desire of accompanying him, he spoke as to her—"My dear, are you there, Louisa?"

"Louisa is not here," said a voice that thrilled upon his nerves; "but there is one that ought to be more dear than her, for oh! how much more fondly has she loved!"

"Antonia! was it you then that I heard in the glen? I thought I could not be deceived."

"You were not; the voice of love may betray, but never can deceive. I am a

wretched, undone, unhappy woman, Edward, and I come to you for comfort; but fearful of disturbing your happiness (if indeed you were happy), I have watched, night by night, in hopes that some time you would come hither alone, but never found you till now."

"But how came you in England? what has befallen you?"

"The same answer will serve for both— I *love*. In your cold climate, Love exists only; in mine, he lives; you bind him with a thousand petty chains of duties and proprieties, which fetter and constrain him; in mine, a heavier load is laid perhaps, but once broken, it is gone for ever. I have broken it; I love you, Edward, and I have renounced the world for you."

"My dear Antonia, why do you talk so wildly? know you not that I am married?"

"Yes; I know it well; my heart bears that dagger plunged to the very hilt. If you could see me, Edward, you would read in my altered face and shrunken form, that

you were indeed married—but you know not to whom."

"Indeed I do; the best, the loveliest of her sex, to whom my heart has been betrothed from my childhood."

"But the first devil *she* saw, she changed her love."

"What do you mean, Antonia?"

"I mean that your beloved Louisa loves another; that if she returned your early affection, she was false to it; and that if she did not, *you* possess not her virgin heart—that was the prize of Mackenzie."

A dagger seemed to enter the heart of Edward; he laid his hand upon it, as if to feel that it were mortal; he was utterly unable to answer.

"For her whose cold bosom could see from day to day the graces of your mind, and watch the unfolding blossoms of your virtues unmoved, for *her* you could slight and despise a being who distinguished you from the day she beheld you, and for you could renounce all that ambition and vanity had presented as dear in life—yes,

Edward! would you have condescended to accept my proffered love, you would have had the satisfaction of forming a fond and pliant mind to your own views of all that is excellent in woman—nay, more, of redeeming an immortal soul from destruction!——But it is over, and we are both lost!"

"Lost!" cried Edward, starting.

"Irreparably lost! I have told you the truth; that truth destroys your confidence in Louisa; and when to this I add, that I am thrown upon your mercy, a stranger in a strange land, unprotected, friendless, almost pennyless—are we not lost?"

There is one species of despair as fatal to the interests of virtue, as one species of hope is often found. Some people trust themselves too far, others resign themselves without a struggle. Such was the case with Antonia, who, feeling that she had been indiscreet to the last degree, concluded she must be guilty. It is an easy thing for a man to say that he should despise a woman so forward, and still easier

for a woman to say, "Were I a man, I should loathe such a creature;" but it would by no means be *found* easy for a man, long sinking under the real or imaginary indifference of a wife he has passionately loved, suddenly fired by jealousy to revenge, to hear a lovely woman, whose every tone and gesture bespoke her love for him, still more strongly than her words and actions, without being moved by her tears, and, in some degree, sympathizing in her feelings. On such a night as this too, when all above, and all around, breathed that enchanting repose which charms the senses and subdues the soul, surely there was virtue in resistance?

"You are *not* lost, Antonia," said Edward; "nor am I; we may be wretched in each having bestowed a tender and faithful heart where their love can never be returned—but yet——"

"Never!" shrieked Antonia, "*never!*"

Edward was silent; there was something so terrible in her voice, he dared not provoke the despair it evinced; he was well

aware that in her mind every passion was violent, and that the powerful talents she so frequently evinced, and the utter abandonment to her love which she had so daringly displayed, were leagued with terrible resolution and agonizing sorrows, beneath which it was too possible for reason and religion like hers to bow down and be extinguished.

He replied gently, "My faith is pledged, Antonia; I dare appeal to your own heart for what I ought to answer you. There appears to have been much confidential communication between you and Mackenzie; perhaps you are not very differently situated to myself. A man of honour, who relies upon your faith, ought not to be deceived; consider what you owe to him, to yourself, and there is a higher consideration than either, Antonia."

"Oh God! oh God! what a very wretch I am!" cried she, casting herself on the ground at his feet, and weeping, as it were, in the very bitterness of repentance. The very soul of Edward was mov-

ed with this sad spectacle; he would have raised her, but she remained for some time as if chained to the earth by the severity of self-reproach and the poignant humiliation of shame; and Edward, unable to leave her, and conscious of the impropriety of his situation, and the surprise his absence must occasion, at length forced her to rise, and drawing her arm under his, besought her to direct her steps homewards.

She pointed to those cottages where he imagined she had taken up her residence, but which he now recollected as being such deplorable huts, it was terrible to think of her abiding there a single night; he mentioned this, and lamented it.

"'When the mind's at ease, the body's delicate,' I think your great poet has said."

"But you mentioned your distress, Antonia, called yourself friendless and pennyless; if you are so indeed, you will surely not hesitate to accept from me that which I *can* give?"

"If I am so, it is by choice only—Ah, Edward, if you knew to what penances I

have exposed myself, what sufferings I have endured, how nobly I have at sometimes struggled with the passion which consumes me, and at others how miserably I have been its victim, oh, I am sure you would pity far more than you blame me—yes, even your Louisa would pity me."

"I do pity you—from my soul I do."

"Think what it is for the heart to picture perfection it never can attain, and to remember that the very virtues it admires forbid its approach—to endeavour to imitate that which it so ardently esteems, yet know that in winning sufferance it loses the last chance of awakening love, and that in proportion as it is estimated, so it will be avoided. Oh terrible, terrible fate! at this very moment you wish I were yet in Spain. The only power I have ever possessed over you has been to make you tremble."

"You say you love me, Antonia, and I believe it; but would you make that love a blessing, to so control it that it

became not a [illegible] you distress me exceedingly."

"Do I indeed d[illegible]?" she cried, turning and gazing earnestly upon him; "oh! there is a terrible comfort in this! Had I ten thousand lives, I would give them all to wipe away a tear of yours; and yet those tears are precious to my heart. Edward, you pity me now, you will one day love me."

"Never!" again trembled on Edward's lip, but he feared to articulate it; he wished to leave her while she was comparatively reasonable; and as they now were near the dwellings, he slightly pressed her hand, and darting into the glen, was quickly out of sight.

When he reached the knoll where he had so often sat with Louisa, and where of late he had certainly enjoyed a communion of taste and sentiment, if not of confidence, so sweet, that it appeared little short of all the "heaven of love," he threw himself down upon it, and for some moments in-

dulged in all the [illegible] the assertions and information [illegible] well calculated to [illegible] a short period of reflection enabled him to perceive that she had produced no proof of Louisa's passion for Donald, beyond what he had himself suspected, and she was too well acquainted with his vanity to believe that any such proof remained untold. What then? Had he discovered that Louisa had once felt a transitory passion for Donald, which, as a daughter, she had conquered—that it had probably left a void in her heart she had endeavoured most duteously to fill—and that her conduct as a wife had bespoke her earnest anxiety to make him happy to the utmost of her power? Surely her friendship had been as warm, her attentions as kind as it were possible; she might be pitied; but it was impossible for even self-love to blame her.

Thus reasoning, Edward arose, and returned, as we have seen, still troubled and anxious, and feeling, in despite of his reasoning, some suspicion towards Louisa;

and notwithstanding the real uprightness of his conduct, a sense that she had a right to suspect *him*. The night he spent was only less wretched than her own, and there can be no doubt but Antonia possessed many of his wandering and troubled thoughts. He rose early, and received from Phœbe a note addressed to him, which she had found laid on the floor an hour before; he opened it, and read—

"My anguish on the review of my conduct is such, that I cannot forbear beseeching you to pardon me the chagrin that I have caused you, and particularly my having blamed in so rash a manner one whom I ought rather to have copied. The time consumed last night in exhibiting the sad dominion of a passion, which you had probably consigned to oblivion, ought rather to have been employed in seeking your mediation with a friend, in shewing you the clue I have now got by which to trace my father—in fact, my making you

what you wish to be, and can be—a friend and brother; but, alas! I saw you, and I forgot all beside.

"During the live-long night I have wandered round your dwelling; I have envied the walls that enclose you, the beams of light that shall meet your opening eyes; but I will not increase my offence. Alas! it is the sad, the just punishment of my crime, to know that my love offends you.

"Farewell! You cannot answer this; I would not injure your peace—oh, no! Happy, envied woman! your eyes may not see all the radiance of the jewel you possess; yet I would not dim them with a tear. Once, and once only, will I see him more—'tis the last indulgence of the wretched

"ANTONIA."

As Edward put this note into his pocket, and gave one sigh to the writer, and another to her closing resolution, Louisa entered the room. She looked very pale;

and he could not help believing that she was suffering from him, and whilst it pained him, he yet felt somewhat gratified; but he could not think of the transactions of the preceding evening without wishing to escape inquiry. He was affected by the unblaming tones of Louisa, and the manner in which she appeared to make him a party in her feelings, and thus became restored to himself, and the succeeding days passed as we have seen.

But on the evening when Sally thus puzzled and distressed her mistress, Antonia had broken upon him from a little coppice so near his own dwelling, and so much in the track the children were wont to pass, that he became on that account alarmed, and entreated her to leave him; but a circumstance had happened which distressed her, and on which she entreated his advice with such apparent humility and contrition, at the same time with that terrible energy which would not be resisted, that he was at length induced to return with her into the coppice; it was at the

moment when she seized his hand, and thus solicited him, that they were espied by the little maid, and the suspicion and wonder of her mind was naturally excited.

—The sun was sunk beneath the horizon, and the trees shed a deep shade over them both, when Antonia took from her pocket a letter, which had been sent to the cottage where she lodged, and which she said contained an anonymous avowal of love, and was written in such a superior style, that she could not doubt its being the product of a gentleman. As it was too dark to read it, she repeated some of the sentences, from which it appeared, that the author considered her a person in distress, and in making her an offer of his heart and his fortune, concluded that of his hand was unnecessary. Antonia was alarmed and angry with this epistle; she was shocked at being thus discovered by a person who might, from the interest thus awakened, be led to find out who she really was; and angry that any one should dare to approach

her with an offer of illicit love. But Edward, though shocked, endeavoured to convince her that it was impossible for her to escape observation, and that she had little right to resent an insult to which her own indiscretion had given rise. Antonia had hoped very different conclusions would actuate Edward from this confidence; she flattered herself that he would be alarmed for her safety, and offer her more immediate protection; and believed that such was his compassion for her, that if she was placed in any situation where she could frequently see him, the exertion of her talents, the power of her charms, and the proofs of her attachment, could not fail, in time, to produce some return to her passion. She felt as if she had renounced the world, and followed her beloved to a desart, and she determined to secure him there, again forgetting all her better resolutions respecting his wife, and even the strong sense she entertained of his integrity, and that in forfeiting all pretensions to

his esteem, she would eventually lose even his compassion.

"But what would you have me to do now?" said Antonia, in a tone of reproach and irritation.

"Return to your uncle, wherever he may be, and if possible, so account for your absence, or apologize for it, as to insure the continuance of his protection."

"Impossible! I am weary of him—weary of myself—of my existence. I will return to him no more."

"Antonia, act more worthy of yourself; use your talents, your reason, let me add, your religion, in enabling you to conquer an unworthy passion, and in restoring to society, its duties, and its comforts, one so fitted to perform the first, and give zest to the last. Let me not, in addition to many sorrows, have the misery of knowing that I have been (however innocently) the means of total ruin to you."

"There is no retrieving the past, either in conduct or feeling; you have inspired

a passion that can end but with my existence: if you persist in this cruel coldness, this affectation of unnatural wisdom, you destroy me by slow and merciless tortures, compared to which the assassin's dagger is a stroke of tenderness—love like mine is unconquerable."

"Antonia, you have told me that Louisa loved another," (the tongue of Edward faltered as he said this,) "yet she, at the call of duty, has conquered a passion inimical to her happiness."

"Talk not of *her*, unless you would see me die before your eyes: is it not enough that you prefer her, and did prefer her even before she had allowed you to hope? would you give me another cause for hating her?"

Edward moved away, horror-struck and disgusted, inwardly blaming himself that he had ever wished for an impassioned wife.

"Stop, stop, I beseech you!" cried Antonia, throwing herself forward to impede his flight with a frantic air; "have you no

mercy, no consideration for the agonies of a heart wounded and stung to very madness? Can you, even you, all calm and collected as you appear, say that in moments of doubt and jealousy you have never been unjust, never erroneous? pity me, I would not willingly wrong your wife, indeed I would not; but I am a wretched, *wretched* woman; pardon and pity me."

Antonia wept bitterly; Edward was silent; he could not tear himself from her in such an instant of sorrow, neither could he so speak as to sooth her, without misleading her and himself.

"Alas," cried Antonia, as she recovered her voice, "unhappy as you see me, you know not half my sorrows, which began from my birth, for the distress of my mother in my early infancy, when she considered herself a widow, nurtured in me a corresponding sensibility; and her anger, when she considered herself cruelly deceived, and irreparably injured, operated on her so as to influence my feelings and

education, just at that time when the mind and the heart are most capable of taking the bent those around them desire to bestow. I then loved my mother alone, I was the sole confidant of her wishes, her hopes, her sorrows, and the sole instrument by which she could accomplish her revenge, which she would have directed not only against the man who had destroyed her peace, but against his whole perfidious sex. Thus was I made a coquette from principle; my talents were cultivated, my manners formed, for the express purpose of gaining power, in order to give pain, as well as to secure an establishment in this country, and be by that means the better enabled to discover my father. Ah! how have these fatal arts recoiled on my own head! a coquette should have no sensibility; vanity and apathy should be the sole ingredients of her composition. Alas! I am the victim of the feeling my soul derided even while it awakened, and I now suffer what I sought to inflict."

Anxious to interrupt a description of

sensations to which he could not listen, Edward inquired what were the new lights respecting her father to which she had alluded in her letter, as the means of bringing her again to England? he asked this question not only to divert her mind from the subject on which she ever recurred, but in the faint hope of learning that he was not, as he had too much reason to fear, the sole cause of her coming over.

"When," answered Antonia, "my mother received the fatal news of my father's infidelity, and considered the years in which she had been mourning, in the bitterness of sorrow, him who had probably consigned her to anguish, for the express purpose of taking another bride, her rage was ungovernable, and in the first transports of her fury, she was about to destroy every vestige of correspondence that had taken place between them, and especially his picture, over which she had been wont to weep so fondly, was the first object of her vengeance: happily a friend who then visited her snatched it from the flames, to-

gether with one of a pair of bracelets woven of their united hair; these reliques she kept during her stay, and took with her on leaving the house, lest in another paroxysm they should be completely destroyed, but held them ready at my uncle's call: unhappily my mother's death prevented him from demanding them. Our friend resided at Saragossa; her husband was among the first who suffered there, in consequence of resisting the French; and to cut short a long detail of horrors and wrongs, these things, with other property, fell into the enemy's hands, and after being completely lost to us for between four and five years, have been restored by those events which sometimes occur in a state of warfare; an English officer became possessed of them, and from an envelope of the bracelet, discovered that of right they belonged to my uncle, to whom he restored them: would that he never, never had! Fatal, fatal present!"

Antonia broke into a fresh agony of tears.

" I apprehend that officer was sir Donald Mackenzie."

" It was."

" And from this interview he became your admirer?"

" Yes, for he was piqued at sir Francis Mowbray's refusal; and still more piqued because his uncle had been anxious that he should address your sister, to whom he had ever given a preference; his love for me grew quite as much out of vexation as passion. I saw very plainly that disobedience furnished the arrow, and chance directed it. I saw too that with many attractions, Donald was not formed to be a lover, nor to be long beloved; he is too magnificent for common use; we admire him as we do lightning, which at once dazzles and affrights us; it is by daylight that we are warmed and enlightened."

" This was your first conclusion, but on further acquaintance, Antonia, you thought differently."

" I did; I saw he was a mere man, with

more of vanity, selfishness, ingratitude, and inconsistency, than the most of them, yet possessing so many of those qualities women in general designate charming, that every woman must be flattered by his attention; and if she preserves her heart, she might make a very agreeable husband of him, for he will be kind so long as he is anxious: it is my misfortune to have studied your sex too closely, you see. Alas! it has made me estimate excellence, when I *did* find it, but too highly."

"But, Antonia, you have not told me how far you have listened to Mackenzie's love?"

"Nor have I told you how far Mackenzie's love for me was aided and abetted by his respect for my poor uncle's property; but you may recollect hearing from your friend, that the old gentleman long ago determined never to give me any thing, till I had met with some person of rank in this country, who will own me as a relation—a most charitable conclusion, for which in my heart I sincerely despise him; since,

however, it arises from a prejudice to which necessity compels me to submit, I came hither once more to search for an imaginary being, not without hopes, I confess, that should my uncle die before this precious discovery takes place, he will still provide for me—and yet——."

"He wishes you then to marry Mackenzie?"

"To tell you the truth, he would now marry me to any one, even to the most heretical heretic that would take me; he discovered my visit to you, and has never been happy about me since. Ah, Edward! that visit, when I beheld you stretched on the bed of sickness, by the hand of that beloved friend whom you had wrested from my toils—ah, what were the agonies of that night!"

"Let us forget these agonies; forget whatever would weaken your resolutions, and prevent your return to—what shall I say? propriety—duty."

"Say what you please; I merit your reproaches; but oh, Edward, surely it is

not *your* hand that should inflict punishment; yet what other could wound me so acutely?"

"But you do not tell me how far you hold yourself engaged to Mackenzie?"

"Mackenzie is now with the army; he is brave, he will expose himself, for glory is the deity he worships."

"But he has hitherto escaped, and may still escape; surely, Antonia, you have not encouraged a man for whom you can be so totally indifferent, that you look on his death as an event to be expected, without pain?"

"And surely, you who have seen me break through every tie to seek another man, to confess my love to him, to humble myself to the very dust before him, to sue, in despite of rejection, even for his pity, cannot wonder that another is indifferent to me—nay, far below indifference, when I see that you consider him as a rival. I forgot his existence when I fled to you; and surely, surely, Edward, *you* can forget it too?"

"Never, never!" thought Edward, who had felt it already in every pore before he knew Antonia. He again persuaded her to return to her uncle, whom he found she had left still much of an invalid at the hot-wells at Bristol, whither she had persuaded him to go, on finding that Edward was in Wales, when they arrived in London; and that she had induced the old gentleman to believe that it was more probable that she should discover her relations, if she made a tour through the principal part of the island incognito and unattended, under which pretext she had left him. Edward, though softened by her sorrow, was tormented by her professions of love for him; yet notwithstanding his uneasiness, such is the power of beauty and talent, thus impassioned and desperate, that ere they parted, he found that he had his own battle to fight over again; and when he was once out of the toils, he determined that no motive should induce him to enter them again. Devoutly did he thank that God who seeth in secret, that he had escaped; but though his

heart ascended with confidence to Heaven, yet he felt as if he could not meet the eye of his wife, because he knew that his situation had been suspicious, that he was, in fact, guilty in the very circumstance of holding clandestine intercourse at all with Antonia, whom yet humanity forbade him wholly to abandon, and whose fatal secret every principle of honour obliged him to keep.

Slow and lagging were the steps which brought Edward back to his habitation; and as the low suppressed sighs of Louisa from time to time broke on his ear, they appeared to him the language of merited reproach; sometimes he wished to speak to her, and felt that he ought at least to inquire after her health; but he dared not trust himself to speak, lest his perturbation should betray him, and lead her to suspicion, which might render her unhappy, and from which he still hoped she might be free. Whilst on her part, she lay revolving in distress the cause of his silence, still combatting the idea of his infidelity,

yet in vain endeavouring to account for his communication with any person who answered the description of the queen of the gypsies, who sung so enchantingly, for she could not help believing it was the same person, especially as he had never once adverted to the circumstance, which might certainly have been expected, if there had been no reason for his silence—a silence which was in fact the most mysterious part of the affair.

They rose, they breakfasted; not as they were wont, discoursing on the beauties of nature, the talents of an approved author, or that far dearer subject, the point on which their feelings concentrated most closely, the return of their mutual parents: all was gloom, and melancholy musing; and Edward saw too plainly that Louisa had from some quarter received intelligence that shocked her, and which he apprehended was the true cause of her withdrawing befor[illegible]s return the preceding evening. He wished very much to know the precise amount of what she had heard, persuading

himself that he could remove her suspicions, without revealing Antonia's situation precisely, and certainly without mentioning her name; but he was aware that he could not lead to the subject without an embarrassment in his voice, that would render what perhaps was only a trifling suspicion, a very serious one, and he dared not open a wound of so delicate a nature; besides, it was possible that his consciousness that there was something worthy of suspicion, led him to make the conclusion; since Louisa's melancholy was not that of sullenness, she might be ill, and he had certainly not appeared to sympathize with her complaints so much as usual; he was therefore adding a fault to the misfortune which had in fact befallen them both.

Thus reasoning, Edward forced himself into conversation, and had soon the satisfaction of perceiving Louisa listen to him with interest, and a degree of pleasure, although she was evidently revolving something in her mind which puzzled and dis-

tressed her; and by the care she took to avoid any reference to the evening before, it was plain that she thought much of it. A mind so ingenuous as hers could not, however, help betraying something of that which alone occupied her thoughts; and after a short pause in their conversation, she observed involuntarily, "I think there is no moon at present—at least it is very late."

Her face was instantly covered with blushes, and conscious of her confusion, she rose and left the room, to speak to Mrs. Morgan. Edward was no longer in any doubt, and felt persuaded that he had been seen to enter or leave the coppice with Antonia; perhaps Mrs. Morgan had seen him; he was aware how rapidly things of this kind are spread in even the most retired parts of the country, and he felt not a little vexed and ashamed; but as he pursued the subject, still greater evils appeared inevitably to arise from it; he recollected that he had seen, a few days before, mention made of a part of Mackenzie's regi-

ment being ordered home, and thought, that if he accompanied it, standing, as he apprehended he did, in the light of a received lover to Antonia, it was probable that *he* might be called upon to answer for her present folly; and he was well aware, that as the husband of Louisa, he should be pursued with two-fold vengeance, whilst the most indelible disgrace could hardly fail to affix itself to his name: with the idea of infamy came all the agonies of a mother who lived in his virtues, and the bitter disappointment of a man who had been more than a father to him; and even Henry appeared in the train as if again holding out a hand armed better than before to avenge the imagined wrongs of his sister; he could not endure the congregated evils thus rising to his view, and unable to conceal his emotion, he walked out into the garden, and threw himself on a bench in the arbour, endeavouring to arrange his thoughts, and if possible, devise some plan of action which might enable him at least to save those he loved from

participating in his misfortune. His mind was burdened to its utmost, his heart was very heavy, yet there was a secret satisfaction lurking in the bottom of it, from the belief that Louisa really began to love him, and that the grief under which she laboured, arose from doubts of his constancy and affection; and whilst he ardently wished to save her from every pain, yet he felt it sweet that she should sorrow for *him*.

When Louisa had recovered herself, she returned to the parlour, and was scarcely sorry to find Edward had left it, for it is ever the nature of jealousy to hide its head, and by that means its existence is generally perpetuated; it is likewise as changeable as it is timid, and there is no time when the sorrows of a beloved object are more tenderly sympathized with, the moment anger on account of his real or supposed inconstancy happens to be removed. Louisa could just perceive her husband through the opening branches which formed the arbour; she beheld him stretched in sorrow,

not listlessness; his face covered by his hands; and she thought she heard deep sighs rise from his oppressed bosom. She could not bear this sight, and she blamed herself for having added to his affliction; and as she turned over the possibilities that might be really afflicting him, it struck her that as they had not heard from lord Welbrooke for many weeks, he was again in distress, and it was possible that the gipsey seen by Sally might have been a messenger from him. This idea was too sensible a relief to her mind, for her not to dwell upon it with avidity; and in a short time, she had resolved all her husband's uneasiness into this channel, and she left the songstress again to chance, trusting that the anxiety and absence he had lately evinced might be only too probably traced to a source of trouble which it was too natural for him to disguise from her, since she had been so much a sufferer from it.

While Louisa is thus amiably accounting for distress in which she now sincerely sympathized, and Edward is endeavouring

to break the cloud which threatened his name, as well as his peace, perhaps it may be desirable to inquire after the person who so much interested both, but who had for a considerable time thought little of either, having left London the very day after that on which, being alarmed himself, he had alarmed Louisa, and caused her hasty flight at the very time when Edward might have staid with safety, although prudence certainly dictated his present retirement.

CHAP. VII.

When lord Welbrooke left London, he rejoined his late friends at Weymouth, where, as he was now stripped of all immediate resources, it was not surprising that he found himself treated as a wicked man, who presumed to make love to a young lady of most blameless manners, although he knew that his wife was actually recovering her health, and of course, that it could not be in his power to offer a coronet to his fair enslaver; and her immaculate papa, after accepting or cheating him in one way or other of thousands, now hinted that if the viscount presumed to dangle after his daughter any longer, he should be obliged either to resent his conduct as an affront, or expose it in the way it merited.

On such an offender, lord Welbrooke could not wreak the anger with which his whole frame was enkindled; he speedily

withdrew, not more enraged than abashed, from the field; and such was his sincere vexation, that he not only forswore all future gallantries, but would actually have set out to the Madeiras after his lady, had it not been that sir Francis Mowbray was present to his imagination as a penetrating accuser. For a short time he visited his new-married daughter, lady Lawson, where he became the admiration of her husband's friends, for his elegance and suavity, though Adelaide herself in their absence frequently got a taste of the old leaven, for he was now too much out of cash to be really in good humour; and the fact was, he only waited there for drafts from his lady on her steward; he was relieved at the very time when colonel Bellair wrote to him, proposing their meeting at Hereford races, and he accepted the proposal with pleasure.

The colonel had for several years past been devoted to the pleasures of the turf; he had been unsuccessful at Newmarket, and sought at present a distant field from

the scene of his discomfiture. He had quitted Weymouth before the viscount received dismissal, in which he rejoiced, because he thought it would lead him among a society of honest fellows, which would be more suitable for his time of day than whining sentiment with Misses, or losing his money to inviting wives and convenient dowagers. Besides, he knew that in all matters of play, all hazards of gambling, his lordship was a complete dupe, of course a very convenient companion. "There is no friendship amongst the wicked."

Hereford races present many pretty Welch girls to the gaze of the company, as well as the English beauties who assemble there from the western counties, and upon the whole it is a gay and fashionable scene, considering its remoteness from the capital, and the more populous parts. But colonel Bellair had eyes only for horses, and his own were pre-eminent in fame. Lord Welbrooke had made for once a covenant with his eyes, which he kept; he admired all the women, but singled out not one.

The first day, colonel Bellair's horse won a prize, and his master a many prizes, in the shape of bets, which so delighted him, that he drank to excess, a fault to which he had of late become very subject, and which had in fact so alienated the heart of his lady, as to be one of the principal causes of her going abroad. In consequence of the sanguine hopes awakened by success and intoxication, he was induced to double all his bets for the following day, on which they were all lost, and of course the balance was terribly against him, and he became a greater loser here than he had been at Newmarket.

To redeem these losses, he determined to tempt that money out of lord Welbrooke's pocket which he had so lately discovered to be resident there; but he well knew that his lordship had little inclination to play, and that he was afraid of *him*; it was therefore necessary that he should be flushed with wine, and as he was in that respect an abstemious man, it would

not be difficult for one of his description, notwithstanding the debauch of yesterday, to raise the viscount's spirits sufficiently for his purpose, without injuring his own head. So ruminated the colonel, as he returned from the race-course to the inn, with his dear friend sitting beside him, very sincerely condoling with him upon his losses; and it is very probable that friend would have been thus duped, but at the moment the colonel's carriage, with many others, drew up to the inn-door, a post-chaise was there also; the waiter wishing it at the devil, opened the door and let down the step with an hurrying air; an elegant-looking female figure, whose face was completely hid by the numerous folds of a thick black veil, appeared at the door, and stepped with one foot out on the deep step; but seeing so many carriages and gentlemen about the place, she hesitated whether to go into the house or not, whilst the nobleman and the colonel left their vehicle and passed by her into the house.

"Please, ma'am, to alight; no danger at all, ma'am."

The viscount turned his head to the post-chaise.—"What an elegant little figure!" said he internally; "and good Heavens, what an ankle! Bellair, did you ever see so fine an ankle?"

"Aye, a thousand, my lord."

"I'll bet what you like you never saw such a one."

"Done for a hundred—two, if you like."

The lady, alarmed, rather by the looks than the words, instantly drew back into the chaise, and in a low tone desired the waiter to order another for the next stage, and declined going into the house at all.

The colonel thought it a good omen for his design, that lord Welbrooke thus began with betting, and continued to converse about the lady's ankle, under the idea that when a woman was in the viscount's head, he would have little command of his judgment; but in this particular his own com-

pletely failed him; the viscount was seized with an intolerable curiosity to see or know more of the possessor of a beauty in which he had always considered himself a great connoisseur; and while the colonel was briskly pushing the bottle, he stole out, to interrogate the waiter further as to the lady; he first learnt that she was gone northward, then that she had little luggage, and lastly, came to the question most upon his mind, "was she handsome?"

To this the man replied, "that she spoke like a very handsome person, that he must needs say."

"But are you sure you never saw her face?"

"Quite sure, my lord, barring her eyes, which were black; but I think they were not over and above bright."

"Pshaw! she must be handsome; why should she take such pains to conceal herself if she were not?"

"Very true, my lord; except, indeed, she were ugly; and begging your lord-

ship's pardon, I should rather think that head might be it."

His lordship was of a very contrary opinion, and he returned to the company vexed, and with his brain so tacked to the stranger's heels, that all the efforts of the colonel were vain; although in order to guard him from suspecting his designs, he swallowed himself bumper after bumper: at length beginning to find himself a little flustered, and perceiving that the viscount had again left the room, he dispatched a gentleman in quest of him, who returned to say that his lordship was that very moment stepping into a chaise and four, having left a note for him with the waiter, to apologize, he understood, for his departure. Enraged, mortified, and disappointed, the colonel had recourse to his bottle now, as the only way of hiding his chagrin, and subduing his sense of it; he drank till he dropped senseless from his chair, and was carried to his bed more dead than alive—a bed he never rose from, for the excessive heat of the weather co-operating with the

excesses of the two last days, and the violent agitations under which he had lately suffered, brought on a fever of so virulent a nature, that in five days he became its victim: being attended only by servants, who did not know of Mr. Sefton's present residence, the news of his illness and his death necessarily travelled round to London ere it reached his niece; and at the period we have been speaking of, it was unknown to the inhabitants at Mrs. Morgan's.

It will be supposed that lord Welbrooke had set out in search of the stranger, whom he pursued for a considerable way successfully, but completely lost sight of at Caernarvon, though he could not learn by any inquiry that she had taken shipping there; he determined therefore to spend some time in watching for her, being persuaded that it was impossible for her to escape him.

Finding himself thus unexpectedly in his son's neighbourhood, obliged his lordship to be circumspect; however, as it was

to be expected that a stranger would visit the surrounding country, little notice was taken of his wanderings; and in a few days he had the satisfaction of tracing the elegant fugitive to a miserable cottage, where he felt convinced that only want could have driven her; and happy that he could immediately remove that evil, he lost no time in addressing her by the only medium which circumstances admitted, though it was one to which he never resorted where it was avoidable; he knew too well the art of soft persuasion which hung upon his tongue to doubt its powers; and the great object of his present endeavour was to gain an interview with the lady in question.

This was however refused, but refused in such a style as to pique his curiosity and inflame his passion; determined, if possible, to see, without alarming her, a woman who was become more interesting from her mysterious situation, than she could be from any personal attractions to one who had seen so little of her, he stooped to dis-

guise himself as one of the peasantry, and by watching the cottage, at length saw her leave her home in the evening, and wander alone into the neighbouring glen. Hovering near her, yet avoiding her, under the persuasion that even his eloquence would fail to render his garb endurable, and perhaps, remembering that he was not quite the man he was twenty years before, he listened to her singing, and became really as much transported with her beauty and talents as he had been when they were only creatures of his imagination. But this pleasure received a drawback, from the idea that she was already informed with the passion he wished to inspire; and every thing around her tended to confirm the idea. Why was she recluse and unattended? why were her songs ever amatory and plaintive? why could she submit to such a mode of existence, when not only from the reports of the cottagers, but her appearance, she was blest with abundance, if she came not to seek or meet a lover?

The jealous have keen eyes; one evening the watchful peasant beheld the fair object of his hourly solicitation steal softly from a coppice far beyond her usual haunt; her steps were slow, and she was evidently in tears; he longed to throw himself at her feet, and attempt to sooth her sorrows, but suddenly recovering himself, he darted away, and in his speed ran against a young man who was apparently diverging from the path where he met the lady; a new feeling of angry rivalry now assailed him; with a menacing air he darted his eyes upon the stranger, and with a sensation of indescribable horror beheld his son.

That son whose breast was at this moment as full of perturbation as his own, passed on unheedingly, while the father, conscience-struck, felt more horror at conceiving his son resembled himself, than he had ever done from perceiving the extent of his own crimes in any former view of them; he even arraigned the conduct of Edward with severity, and was ready to

conclude the man wicked beyond all names of wickedness, who could forsake a Louisa; remembering not the time when his Emma, as fair, as virtuous, and as amiable, had been forsaken and afflicted; and even when her forgiveness, her tenderness, her ties as a mother, and her generosity as a friend, had increased her claims on his love and gratitude, had been again injured, insulted, neglected, and forsaken; so ready are we to condemn that in others we allow in ourselves.

When lord Welbrooke a little recovered from the surprise and shock he had received, the sorrowful air each party wore became subject of contemplation to him, and he could not believe that his son was a successful wooer; yet it was evident that the lady had sought him, unless, indeed, their acquaintance had commenced, like his own, since her abode at the cottage, in which case, probably, it had not gone far; he wished to stop it, not only as a rival, but as a father; and he felt as if Edward had never been of so much impor-

tance to him as now; his very blood recoiled at the idea of his unworthiness, and though the thought of his son's guilt did for one moment pass through his heart, awakening the consolation of knowing him to be only on his own level, he repelled it the next as giving him intolerable pain, and he felt at this moment that if his family had resembled himself, he should have been infinitely more wretched than he was, in the severest moments of self-reproach.

"Surely," cried he, "Edward may yet be saved;" and as he spoke, he determined to attempt it; and instantly setting out to the cottage where he kept his clothes, he dressed himself in his own garb, told his servant to call him by his own name, and mounting the horses he had been accustomed to hire at Llanberris, set out for Beth-Gellard, which he determined to make his present abode.

It was late when he arrived at the little inn, and the agitation of his mind made him pass the night as sleeplessly as the son was doing, whose conduct he so unjustly

and inconsistently arraigned. He arose early, and while his breakfast was preparing, endeavoured to arrange the plan by which he meant to thwart his son's imagined views upon the stranger. Uneasy and undecided, from the consciousness that he had forfeited all right to give the advice, or speak with the authority of a father, he sought refuge from his own thoughts by taking up the country newspaper, which made its appearance with the breakfast equipage, and where the first thing that met his eye was the following:

"Died at Hereford, the 19th inst. colonel John Bellair, of the —— regiment, of a raging fever, which was fatal in five days from its commencement."

The paper fell from the viscount's hands; breathless surprise, and a kind of shuddering more akin to horror than grief, seized upon him; he was shocked that he had left him at a time when undoubtedly the disease had commenced, still more shocked that he had left him for such a cause: death is a solemn subject of contemplation

at all times, but when it visits our immediate circle, chooses those of our own age, society, and habits, those whom we beheld last week as likely for life, and as full of enjoyment as ourselves, we feel as if its icy fingers were laid upon our own hearts, and that the current of our life-blood had received the awful mandate, "hitherto shalt thou go, but no further; here shall thy proud waves be staid."

So deeply did this sense of colonel Bellair's fate take possession of lord Welbrooke's mind, that 'tis very probable the death of not one of his own family would have affected him nearly so much; he did not love colonel Bellair, nor did he lament him, nor would he much miss him, for such men as him can be easily replaced; yet it was very certain that his death afflicted him excessively; and for many hours he was utterly unable either to arrange his plans, or even bear to think upon their necessity. A deep sense of remorse pressed upon his mind, an anxiety to make some sort of reparation for the past, accompanied at the

same time by a sense of unworthiness which seemed to push him back, and render him unable to do even the good he meditated.

But the more he thought, the thicker came the host of pangs which memory inflicted, and at length he fled, or strove to fly before them, by setting out on foot for his son's abode, which he did not reach till the evening sun gilt the mountains; being detained by visiting again that fatal coppice which had been the scene of his guilty search and his momentous discovery on the preceding evening.

He opened the wicker gate, and advancing to the unclosed window, saw Louisa sitting in her little parlour, around which he cast his eyes eagerly, as if to find some beauty, or some charm that might compensate for the elegancies to which she had been accustomed, and from which he had banished her; but he found none, and his heart smote him for this also; she was alone, and her work was in her hand, but she appeared too much occupied by what

was passing in her mind to continue it; she frequently cast her eyes towards the room door or the windows; doubtless she was then listening for her husband; how often had lady Welbrooke thus listened, and, like her, in vain! the face of Louisa was pale, but at those moments when she fancied she heard a step, it became flushed for a moment, and as her hope subsided, he saw her wipe her eyes: the tears sprang to his own.

At length, unable to sustain in quiet the agitation of her mind, she arose, and traversed the room with unequal steps, from time to time casting up her eyes, as if imploring Heaven for assistance; and then as she passed the table, she took up the work she had laid down, and the viscount saw it was a baby's cap; as she gazed upon it, he fancied that he read in her expressive features, and the tears which now streamed from her eyes, "surely my child at least will never forsake me!" his very heart was pierced with sympathy, but his conscience

told him he felt what was due to the feelings of a wife too late.

Unable to endure the feelings thus pressed upon him, the viscount now knocked at the door; on hearing his voice, Louisa stepped forward, and without expressing much surprise, welcomed him, as if aware that he must be in the neighbourhood—a circumstance which not a little embarrassed him, and that embarrassment confirmed Louisa in the conjectures of the morning, which had been strengthened by succeeding events, and especially by the pale countenance and perturbed looks of the viscount.

After a short pause, lord Welbrooke inquired for his son.

" He went out the moment your note was given to him—about an hour ago."

" My note—I have written no note."

Louisa fixed upon her father-in-law at once a fearful, and yet scrutinizing look; she did not wish to betray any conduct, however erroneous, in her husband to his

lordship; but a train of circumstances hitherto, happily for herself, had combined to deceive her, and she felt as if she had committed him; yet what could she think? was she deceived by the father or the son? she hesitated, and his lordship eagerly said,

"Did Edward say he had received a note from me?"

"Oh no! he said nothing, but I believed—I thought—supposing you were in the neighbourhood, I concluded you had written it."

"But how came you to think I was in the country?" said his lordship, with extreme emotion, trembling for the answer.

Louisa gained courage from this emotion; she felt assured that the mystery rested with his lordship, and she replied in a firmer voice,

"My lord, I have seen for many days that Edward was unhappy, and been aware that he concealed this unhappiness from me, lest it should injure my health, which,

as you know, was once materially affected by repeated surprises. I know that he was seen in earnest conversation last night with a person whom I apprehend to have been a messenger from you; and when to-day I saw a note delivered to him, which evidently renewed that agitation and sorrow that he had previously subdued, I concluded very naturally that it was from you, and when you entered, I felt no doubt but that you had been meeting your son."

The simplicity of this statement shewed clearly that Louisa had no suspicion of the truth, and proved also that the sorrow he had observed in Louisa before his entrance, arose from himself entirely, and was the apprehension natural to one who has already suffered much.

Lord Welbrooke saw at once that Edward was now with the stranger, and aware that they were not in the coppice, he concluded that he had gone to her cottage; and was the more confirmed in this, as during his stay in the garden he had ob-

served the clouds gather, and many symptoms of a threatening storm. He felt it his imperious duty to go immediately to the cottage, and the warning of the morning had taught him the value of an act of duty, especially when it was a painful one; the affrighted conscience ever seeks for expiation in sacrifices; and the first lord Welbrooke found necessary was, the permitting poor Louisa to continue under a deception which rendered the belief in his faults necessary to relieving her from a surmise infinitely more painful.

Taking therefore a hasty leave, he said " his son had undoubtedly taken a wrong direction," and hastened out of the house; as he passed through the glen, with which he was now become well acquainted, he looked eagerly, as the just rising moon, now in her wane, would permit him, on every side, but all was silent and motionless: the fitful clouds now opening gave a glimpse of lurid light, and now closing, added to those horrors which creep over the heart, when thoughts of the grave and the

world it opens, are uppermost on the mind; and even the perturbation of the present moment, when the dearest interests of life were at stake, could not prevent lord Welbrooke from thinking principally of colonel Bellair, and the suddenness of his removal; "his voice in every breeze he seemed to hear," and it was a voice without one sound of comfort, though its last accents, as given to his ear, were those of unbounded mirth and festive jollity.

At length he reached the end of the glen, and felt a certain relief at beholding the habitation of living man in the cottage of Antonia, (that fatal stranger who had so lately awakened "the sin that easily beset him;") there were lights both on the ground floor and the little chamber, from which he felt some comfort, as he had understood she lived literally alone, and was served by the people of whom she had hired the place, who now lodged with their neighbours; but yet his knees smote each other, his hands trembled as he laid hold on

the latchet, and he felt that if his son were indeed the lost and guilty being he feared, yet he had no right to reproach him, no power to reclaim him. He had himself set him the terrible example of infidelity and seduction; and the sins of the father were at once visited, perpetuated, and punished in the son.

CHAP. VIII.

Before we introduce lord Welbrooke into the cottage of Antonia, it appears necessary to mention the reason which had induced his son to enter it, since he had certainly made what he deemed a decisive resolution to hold no farther intercourse with her.

When Edward, after laying some hours on the garden seat, in that deep and painful abstraction we have mentioned, having at length arranged the best plan of action, returned into the house, he had the satisfaction of finding himself accosted by a voice of such soothing sympathy, as greatly tended to restore his peace. The idea that Louisa had adopted respecting his father, she purposely, though indirectly displayed, under the supposition that it would either enable him to open his troubles to her with more ease, or give him that support under

them which it was evident he so much needed. Although this opening of Louisa's conceptions of the case robbed him of the notion he had lately entertained respecting her being jealous, and of that degree of pleasure he had attached to it, as a proof of love for him of that ardent nature he had wished to inspire, yet he did not experience so much disappointment in this view of the circumstance, as comfort from another. Louisa, if she had heard any thing, must have heard that a woman was concerned; yet it was plain that she dared to trust him even with a negociator, who had probably been described as young and handsome. Her esteem, her confidence, were surely better worth having than her jealousy; and when to these were added the air of ingenuous pity, which at this moment invited him to repose his griefs in her sympathizing bosom, united with that true tenderness, that genuine delicacy, which forbears intrusion, even when it displays friendship, how could he forbear to own that Louisa's conduct gave proof of the

purest affection, the most perfect example of connubial love?

Yet to speak to her, to indulge the wishes of his heart, was impossible, not only for Antonia's sake, but even her own, and he was obliged to permit her to remain in error as to the object of her fears; and what was still worse, as to her belief of his confidence in her love and her wisdom; and with both their hearts full, and anxious respecting objects of the last importance, they endeavoured to support a constrained conversation, in which the lips seemed called upon for ideas, as well as utterance; and each avoided the eyes of the other, at the very moment when they were beaming with tenderness on one side, and gratitude on the other: it was in this stat that Sally entering in haste, put a note into the hands of her master, which she said had been just given her by a woman at the door.

The composed manner in which the girl said "a woman at the door," clearly proved to Louisa that the messenger was one of

the neighbouring peasantry, and not the supposed gipsey, which was a little strange; but she was called from this circumstance by the overpowering anxiety and glowing confusion of her husband's countenance, in which evident vexation that she had witnessed the delivery of the note, struck her as predominant, and again brought back the idea that only the correspondence of a woman could have so completely overwhelmed and embarrassed him.

Edward rising and walking to the window, less to obtain light than to hide his face, tore open the note, and read with difficulty, lines evidently written by a hand enervated to no common degree, these words—

"Fly to me, I conjure you, this moment! I must see you: come to me at the cottage, which I must quit in a few hours; a circumstance the most distressing compels me to this, and it is agony to

me to think that you will rejoice in it. But I must *see* you; my life depends upon it; perhaps your own. I am too wretched to think of forms—more than existence depends upon this hour—fly to me, Edward, or you will eternally repent your cruelty.

"A. M.

"Lose not a moment, I conjure you! my fate hangs upon a thread; the carriage is ordered which bears me from you for ever; hasten and save me from distraction; I have something to reveal to you that I cannot, *cannot* write."

This note was read and read again, in silent but intense agitation, before Edward could prevail upon himself to obey its summons, or, indeed, before he could turn round, and dare read its effect upon Louisa. When at length he ventured to do so, he perceived with a sensation of relief that she had silently withdrawn; he scarcely knew to what to attribute conduct which certainly sprung from the

kindest consideration for him; but he thought it a kind of permission to act unrestrainedly; and though his heart ached, and he felt only a foreboding of sorrow, and probably the recurrence of past scenes in this meeting, yet, considering it to be the last, and persuaded that if he did not comply with her requisition, Antonia might probably attempt to see him even in his own house, he at length set out, though really feeling more pity for the woman he left than her he was about to visit.

There was something so terrible in the frenzied sorrow, the unrestrained passions of Antonia, that although it was impossible for any man, either in the weakness or strength of his nature, to listen to, or behold her unmoved, when with equal beauty, eloquence, and sensibility, she pleaded her love, yet in reflecting upon her looks, her allusions, the determination with which she pursued every object, and the maddening sorrow which followed every opposition to her will, added to the acute

perception, which, from time to time, she evinced of her own errors, it was impossible not to fear some fatal termination to the excesses of grief and fondness in which she indulged; and Edward felt assured that in the words which now and then escaped her, tending to confirm this fear, no idle threat was intended. Antonia was a very distinct character from the Olivia of Miss Edgeworth's admirable novel *; she had not corrupted her judgment, discarded her principles, and absorbed all native feeling in her farrago of metaphysical jargon and affected sensibility. She was a stranger alike to the errors of that Frenchified German school, which, a few years ago, pervaded society with a species of pestilential infection, and that quiet common sense and simple piety, which, more or less, will (it is hoped,) be found to constitute at least a part of English education.

Antonia had been taught to substitute

* See "Leonora," one of the earliest of these many excellent works with which this estimable author has favoured and instructed the public.

ceremonies for devotion, and enthusiasm for morality; thus she had no principles to lose, and even maternal love in her had been made the groundwork of cunning, the nurse of vanity, the mother of revenge. She had naturally a warm heart, a noble mind, a generous and confiding nature, and, so far as she retained them, praise was due to her, for every thing in her situation, and the nature of her mind, was against her; she was a beautiful but baleful exotic it was natural to admire, but pernicious to live with.

When Edward had arrived at the cottage which Antonia had mentioned as her residence, having tapped at the door, and received no answer, he ventured to enter, and found considerable satisfaction in perceiving a small portmanteau actually packed, and laid, with a parasol and veil, as if ready for immediate departure, on a table near the door. While he stood looking upon them, and inwardly rejoicing in their destination, Antonia descended the little staircase, or rather ladder, which divided

her chamber from the room where he stood, and he perceived that she had been engaged in telling her beads; he was not sorry that any occupation likely to compose her mind, or lead her to religious recollection, should have occurred, and for a moment he flattered himself that the few minutes he should stay, would be passed in peace, and their adieus, though painful, be endured with calmness.

The first glance of her countenance dissipated that hope, and forced Edward to the recollection of how little religion has to do with the heart or the conduct of Spaniards in general, beyond the observance of its ceremonials, which are implicitly attended to under every possible circumstance and condition of life. Antonia springing towards him, began bitterly to lament the severity of her destiny, accuse him of having rendered her wretched, by inspiring an unconquerable passion he was determined never to return, then blamed herself for accusing him, and tormenting him, and pathetically bemoaned her own situation, as

belonging at once to two countries, and adopted by neither—every where a foreigner and a stranger, and at once an heiress, and a dependant orphan, liable to all the miseries of poverty, the weaknesses of luxury, the bitterness of disappointment, and the anxiety of perpetual suspense.

"But," interrupted Edward, "if you would look on the bright side of your situation, Antonia, surely you might with equal justice felicitate yourself on the claims you have on two countries, especially at a time when they are uniting themselves in a manner never known before; and if you are tormented by suspense, yet you are blest with hope."

"Hope! oh no! there is no hope, no comfort for me; you cannot see my allusion; 'tis not between two kingdoms, but two *men* that my heart is thus lacerated, thus agonized."

"What has happened *now* to distress you particularly?"

"Mackenzie has landed; you may read

it there," said she, reaching a newspaper; "not *now;* put it in your pocket; do not waste such moments as these on *him.*"

Edward obeyed her in silence; but after a short pause, said, adverting to the scorn with which she pronounced the last sentence, "I cannot comprehend your dislike of sir Donald, Antonia, since it is evident to me that he possesses some power over you beyond what the mere sanction of your uncle to his addresses can have given; if you are in any way engaged, for Heaven's sake consider seriously the nature of matrimonial vows, and dare not to pronounce them until you have truly and completely 'cleansed your bosom from that perilous stuff with which it has so lately been polluted.'"

"Polluted! say rather hallowed! My passion for you is, I grant, violent; but surely it is pure, Edward? Neither Louisa nor Mackenzie have a right to——"

There was something in the union of these names so utterly repugnant to Edward's feelings, that he instantly started

from his chair, on which he had been leaning with a convulsive motion, which betrayed the sensation he felt to Antonia.

"What!" cried she, "still fearful of Mackenzie?—Ah, happy, happy woman! that can inspire such love, awaken such jealousy! But how strange that you should be thus doubly rivals!—how very dreadful! Oh that Louisa were his, and you, *you*, Edward, were Antonia's!—Nay, do not look on me so severely; I cannot bear your frown at such a moment as this, indeed I *cannot.*"

"I do not wish to frown," returned he, softened, though tormented; "but I cannot hear you name Louisa other than she is—a virtuous, married woman—one who is self-subdued, amiable, and——"

"Hold, hold! do not drive me to despair by shewing me what I ought to be, but what I never, *never* can be, for oh, agony! I too am married!"

"Married!"

"Married to Mackenzie."

For a moment horror appeared to stupify every muscle of Edward's face, and every faculty of his mind, whilst Antonia, gazing upon him with the look of a felon who hears sentence of condemnation pronounced, seemed to inhale despair with every breath, and read the utter extinction of those hopes, which, till this moment, she had nourished in those secret recesses of the heart, which vanity and passion ever occupy. She had hoped that the surprise attending this secret, and the information it could not fail to convey, that if they now parted, their separation would be eternal, might induce Edward to relax in his resolution. She had beheld him shaken with her sorrows and her endearments, and she trusted a moment of such peculiar alarm, such fond entreaty as that she meditated, might overthrow him; but the fatal truth had escaped her in the honest contrition, which, from time to time, rose in her heart, and produced every effect but that which she desired.

The moment Edward's limbs obeyed his

will, he arose, and moved towards the door, heaving a sigh, which seemed to rend his very heart. Quick as lightning she flew and intercepted his retreat; she clung around him—she besought him to forgive her—to have compassion on the love, which, for his sake, had risked all that the world holds dear. He heard her not; she fell before him; she embraced his knees; she vowed that she would never rise till he had pronounced some words of pity, some promise of remembrance, some little, *little* proof of tenderness.

Big scalding drops, the bitterest tears that ever gathered in the eye of man for the frailty of woman, coursed slowly down the cheek of Edward, as with one hand on his forehead, he reached out the other to raise the wretched and fallen being before him. At this instant the door slowly opened; a soft foot was heard to approach, and Antonia, whose conscience presented only an injured husband to her mental view, with a faint shriek sunk back on the floor. Edward stood erect, and beheld his

father. "I hope, my lord," said he, with haste, but devoid of terror, "you have no attendant with you?"

"I have none."

"Beware of that man," said Antonia, hastily raising her head; "he had evil designs on *me*, and may sacrifice you to the fears of a rival; he has watched me in disguise—has spoken under my window; doubtless he wrote me the letter of which I told you."

As she spoke, she rose with an air of dignity and courage which astonished and arrested lord Welbrooke, whose pale cheek became suffused with carnation, not less from the truth of her assertions th[illegible]e boldness with which they were [illegible]vered, by a woman whom he held to be [illegible] victim of a guilty passion. The calm[illegible] of his son was yet more confounding to [illegible], and opposed to his own perturbation [illegible]old him at once that his late fears were vain, and that Edward was innocent. But who was this extraordinary girl, at once so humble and so commanding, from whose eye

he shrunk, and at whose voice he trembled? His curiosity was now more intense than it had been when he sought to find a victim in her he now felt to be his tyrant.

Lord Welbrooke, turning from Antonia, fixed his eyes upon his son; in doing this, his own face received the full light of a lamp which stood upon the table; and whilst he in vain gazed earnestly on Edward's face, as if he would entreat him to unfold the mystery, Antonia, with still intenser looks, regarded *him*. At length she stept into her chamber, returned with another light, which she placed in such a manner as to render the viscount still more conspicuous, and then earnestly looking at something in the palm of her hand, she exclaimed, "It must be so! I cannot be deceived! What a discovery is this!"

The sound of her voice breaking the awful silence which had involved them, caused the viscount again to turn towards her; she seized his arm, and no longer able to command herself, said, in a broken voice, and with breathless trepidation,

"Stranger, you *are*, you *must* be Charles Maynard!"

"Maynard!" exclaimed the viscount, "*Maynard!*" His lips quivered, and he sunk in deadly paleness on a chair.

"Aye, Maynard, the husband of Antonia del Puega, a Spanish girl; the friend of Gabrielle countess d'Estcourt—you know you are; the hour of dreadful retribution is come at last—the sorrows of thy injured wife now claim their vengeance."

"For Heaven's sake cease this, my dear Antonia! you know not what you say the perturbation in which you have been has bewildered you; this gentleman father, who was married long before mother came to England."

"*Your* father! *your* father! oh, h ven and earth; hide me! hide me!"

Antonia dropt on the floor, as if struc by lightning, while her clenched hands a morbid features seemed to indicate the entire annihilation of reason, almost of life. At this terrible sight, lord Welbrooke recovered his senses sufficiently to cry in

agony, "Oh, do not let her die, Edward!" and then relapsed into total helplessness.

Edward, though hardly in possession of his senses, raised Antonia, sprinkled water in her face, and opened the cottage door for the admittance of air, and endeavoured to open her dress, which was a habit, and closely buttoned; as she recovered, she rapidly assisted him in this, and soon succeeded in pulling off the left sleeve, when a large mole appeared just below the shoulder, to which she pointed, saying, "Here, Edward, here is a mark I inherit from my father.—Charles Maynard, you too have a mole like this!—Yes! the picture may deceive *me*, and *he* may deny the bracelet on my wrist; but till my own eyes have beheld his arm, and seen it devoid of such a mark as this, I will never cease to haunt him, to hang upon him, to tell the wide world he is my father."

A terrible groan assented to the fact, and for a moment Edward recoiled from the wretch he was condemned to own for a father, as if a serpent had crossed his

path; the blood seemed congealed in his veins; he was unable to speak; and even the terrible expression of Antonia's features, and the menace of her gestures, the ineffable scorn that darted from her eyes, and the poignant bitterness of her words, seemed barely justice to an offender of so deep a dye.

"Oh, it was nobly done," continued Antonia, "to deceive a young and helpless stranger; cast on the protection of foreigners; it well became a British nobleman, the husband of a virtuous and exalted woman, and the father of a son like this, to abuse all laws, both human and divine; to stain the innocence, abuse the love, and destroy the happiness of a lovely and noble creature every way your equal; and then condemn her, at the hazard of her own life, and that of her unborn babe, to feeling all the pangs of sudden and dreadful widowhood, to pine through years and years of sorrowful bereavement, and yet retain so tender a passion for him who had destroyed her, that death succeeded to dis-

covery. Oh, wicked, *wicked* man! when I remember my mother's sufferings, her vengeance rises too, and I am mad with rage."

—Antonia's gesture was now indeed that of a maniac, and the entire loss of self-command she exhibited, together with the almost infantile weakness to which the terrible perturbations of his heart had reduced the viscount, recalled the pity of his son; and seizing the moment when breathless fury forced Antonia to pause, he cried out in a deprecating voice—

"Spare these reproaches, I beseech you, and whilst you lament your mother, yet remember you address your father, Antonia."

"Father! oh, no, no! he cast me away ere he beheld me; a father's smile never cheered, a father's hand never cherished me: he dared to inflict on me the burden of existence—if it has not been doomed to poverty, and wretchedness, and sin, no thanks to *him*; doubtless there exists others on whom he has bestowed life, that they

might drink the cup of misery to its very dregs—beings whom the first ray of light they beheld, were branded with infamy, and consigned to misery, whose cradles were watered with a mother's tears, whose lullabies were execrations on a father's cruelty.—Do not dare to check me, Edward; has not your mother, as well as mine, a right to complain? was she not deserted, abandoned, afflicted? Oh, yes! yes! I see it all; and I see too, that the Spanish wife he courted to betray, and wedded to dishonour, shall revenge the English one he dared to forsake.—Mother, mother, I will fulfil my vow!"

The heart of Antonia throbbed as if it were about to burst from its fragile inclosure, and her eyes seemed starting from their sockets; her right hand seemed to grasp something beneath her gown, and the strained eyes of Edward fancied for a moment that she had concealed a pistol in her dress: she read his fears by the eager motion with which he caught his father towards him, whilst with the other hand he

attempted to catch her arm; eluding his grasp, she cried with a laugh of horror that thrilled through every vein—

"Do not tremble, Edward; I will not murder him; no! let him live, and suffer as my mother suffered; but, ah, far worse than her! and be this the beginning of his torture!—I have *loved* your son—to madness loved him; you saw me at his feet, pleading an unhallowed flame—for *him*, my own father's son; and you, *you* have sought me, your own child you have sought! see here the very letter in which you tempted my poverty: away—away—body and soul you have destroyed; my blood be on your head! this is my revenge!"

At these words she plucked from her side the dagger, which it now appeared she had been grasping, and was plunging it into her breast, when Edward, by a violent effort, disengaged himself from his father, and seized her arm. Full of the terrible energies awoke by violent and contending passions, she seemed endued with supernatural

strength, and in struggling to regain the dagger, received a terrible wound in the arm, which bled with such profuseness that in a few moments she fainted away; and Edward, in new terror, besought the viscount, for God's sake, to collect himself, and run to the next cottage for female assistance, whilst he, holding her in his arms, endeavoured to stop the alarming effusion of blood.

Lord Welbrooke, taking one of the lamps, stepped to the nearest cottage and knocked at the door; a woman opened the chamber window, and he entreated her to come immediately to the next house; but she answered him in Welch; he repeated the intreaty, but knew not whether he was yet successful; but on listening, light steps were heard, and soon after the slight bolt was withdrawn, and a young female in a white dress appeared, who on seeing him, uttered a faint cry of terror, and shrunk back; he besought her not to be alarmed, and told her the cause of his distress, offer-

ing to withdraw himself if she would proceed to the place where her assistance was so much wanted; and as he spoke, he approached to offer her the lamp: but who shall speak the severity of the stroke which now afflicted him, when he beheld in the pale face, woe-worn, and affrighted features of the fragile being before him, another victim, in the person of Miss Peters!

Agitated and alarmed as she was, equally by his appearance and his information, she yet took the lamp, and hastened to the cottage, where the skill she had acquired under the roof of Mrs. Morgan, who was a village doctress to the poor in her neighbourhood, enabled her to bind up the wounded arm so as to preserve it from further injury, and to apply such restoratives as were at hand, and which at length succeeded in recalling Antonia to life; but a deep stupor seemed to possess her senses, which was, from the late dreadful fervor of her mind, a circumstance rather to be desired than regretted, as doubtless was the prodigious loss of blood she had sustained.

Whilst Edward and Miss Peters were still endeavouring to console and sustain her, the sound of a carriage was heard, and the truth of her assertion thus manifested, that she would leave the place at midnight. On hearing it, she raised her head, and fixing her eyes on Edward, feebly pronounced an intention of proceeding in it. He did not oppose this, but looking at Miss Peters, said, "You cannot go alone." She understood him, and saying she would accompany the lady, stepped back to her cottage to prepare as hastily as possible for her unforeseen journey, leaving Antonia still reclining almost a corpse in the arms of Edward.

The postboy foretelling a storm, considered every moment an hour; but Antonia, who had not once opened her lips during Miss Peters's absence, observed on her return that "she was very quick."

"She is very kind indeed," said Edward; "and will, I am certain, render you every attention of a friend and nurse, nor leave you till your arrival at Clifton; but

I beg you to go only one stage to-night, as it will be necessary to procure the best surgical help for your arm. Take comfort," added he, in a whisper; "all will yet be well; be prudent, and we may all be happy: farewell, my *sister!*"

As Edward pronounced this word, he tenderly kissed Antonia's cheek; in a moment a deluge of tears burst from her eyes, her senses seemed to revive, as her sorrow returned; but he could not lament a circumstance which he doubted not would be eventually beneficial; and as the chaise drove off, distressed as he still felt, and worn down by successive horrors and new causes of anguish, he was yet conscious of considerable relief.

Edward for a moment returned into the cottage, and as well as he was able, wiped away the blood which had stained his clothes, extinguished the lamps, and then hastened home, trembling for the distress of Louisa: he was surprised at not perceiving his father, yet could not wonder that he had avoided entering the cottage

again; for a moment he thought it possible that he had gone into that which Miss Peters left, but as it was equally probable that he had returned to Mrs. Morgan's, as he had, from something that he had dropt on his entrance, learnt that he came from thence, he would not lose time in returning thither; and he pursued his way as speedily as possible by the faint light of the clouded moon, endeavouring to remove from his brow those traces of sorrow and terror, the shocking developments of this eventful evening had planted there.

Faint flashes of lightning gleamed over the dell, and distant thunder was heard before he reached his home, and heavy drops began to fall; he quickened his steps, and hailed with pleasure the distant light in his window, which served him as a beacon; raising up his eyes to it, he exclaimed, "All good angels guard thee, my beloved!" in an instant a voice was heard exclaiming, "Oh, he is here, I have him here!" and his beloved Louisa darted into his arms, clung round his neck, and with

wild and sobbing joy, cried again and again, "oh, I have him! I have him again!"

Grief may be endured; fear, horror, and terror, contended with; but joy, the joy of such a moment as this, succeeding to such a different scene, was *too* much for Edward, and scarcely could he drag his own limbs, and support his almost fainting wife into their little parlour. But when there, how delicious were the tears each shed on the other's bosom! all was unexplained, unknown, yet each enjoyed perfect confidence. Edward felt himself beloved, as well as trusted, and Louisa was content that she recovered him whom she had sympathized with as wandering and distressed, and whom she had sought alarmed and sorrowing.

"But surely you have seen my father, my love?" said Edward, starting from his happy trance.

"Not since he went in search of you, about sunset."

"Good Heavens," cried he, hastening away, as if it were sinful to be blest, "I must seek him; he may have lost his way; a storm has been long threatening, and it is now coming on."

"Edward, you shall *not* leave me," cried Louisa, throwing her arms around him. "I cannot endure again the agonies I have suffered for the last hour: your father is not a stranger in this country, I am *convinced* he is not: doubtless he will take shelter in some cottage; you *shall not*—nay, I know you *will not* leave me, my love; it would really kill me."

Edward felt the claims of his lovely wife more strongly than even she could depict them, and remembering what Antonia had asserted, that his father had watched her in disguise, and spoken under her window, he could not doubt but that he had indeed some temporary home in her neighbourhood, into which he had doubtlessly vanished at the time when he sent Miss Peters to *his* assistance; and although he was well aware that sleep could not visit his

eyes, and that the attentions of a son could scarcely fail to be welcome, he was yet also aware that Louisa had a more immediate claim. She was extremely pale, her clothes were damp, and her feet completely wet, from wandering in the dewy grass; and as he now gazed wistfully upon her, she said, "I have not tasted any thing since you went out, Edward, and I feel exhausted—I am very faint."

In great alarm, he instantly poured out a large glass of Madeira, which he forced her to swallow instantly, and then entreated Mrs. Morgan, who was in the adjoining room, to air her night-clothes, &c. She was soon placed in a warm bed, her cold feet chafed into warmth by the tender hands of a fond husband, who prevailed upon her to take some warm negus and biscuit, which more effectually restored the vital heat, and disposed her to that repose her jaded spirits and harrassed frame required; but her richest cordial, her sweetest restorative, was evidently the company

and the attentions of her husband, on whom she continually cast the eye of jealous, yet fond observance; and whose hand she embraced as he sat beside her, as if by securing it in her feeble grasp, she secured all that could enable her to sleep in tranquillity; and thus bestowing happiness, and receiving peace, she sunk into profound and grateful repose, from which even the succeeding war of the elements, which, though distant, was terrible, failed to awaken her.

CHAP. IX.

For many minutes after lord Welbrooke had perceived that the pale phantom which appalled his eye was indeed Miss Peters, (whose brother had so lately been an object of terror in a different way,) he stood with his back against the cottage wall which she had quitted, in a state of mind to which frenzy itself would have been preferable. A dreadful suspense as to the fate of Antonia tortured him, yet he felt utterly unequal to meeting either her dying looks or her soul-harrowing words, and could encounter them still worse in the presence of one more deeply and immediately injured than herself—one evidently banished from all comfort, and apparently hastening to that awful tribunal to which, perhaps, he might be suddenly called, like his departed friend. From this terrible contemplation he was roused by the sound of carriage

wheels, and that fear of infamy which had ever been so strong a principle in his nature, instantly operated, and the face of man became again more dreadful in his sight, than that of his offended Maker. The chaise had come from Caernarvon, and the place where he now stood was near Plas-y-nant; the moment he espied it drawing near, he darted away in as different a direction as the road permitted, and walking with all the celerity natural to a mind whose energies control even the physical weaknesses they have awakened, he became soon entangled in the pathless and tremendous pass which leads to Dolbarden Castle.

"When the mind's at ease, the body's delicate." Lord Welbrooke, reared in affluence, habituated to luxurious indulgence, felt not the sharp stones that cut his feet, nor the projecting rocks that, obstructing his way, subjected him to infinite labour, and innumerable bruises; "he had that within which passeth show," and which seemed to sustain him against all outward evils, by its own excess of misery.

In a short time all vestige of path, all power of proceeding or returning, was cut off; the moon was totally obscured, and the pale flashes of lightning, which now began to dart more quickly around, showed only in their transient light immense mountains on either hand, that appeared to have scattered from their mighty heads innumerable bulwarks of massy rock, that now inclosed him on every side; he felt as every step he took presented new terrors, and a dreadful necessity compelled him to attend to the dangers without, as well as the storm within him: sometimes he crawled, in the fear of a precipice yawning beneath him; sometimes he shuddered with the idea that the next moment might precipitate another of those enormous masses by which he was surrounded, and crushing him to very atoms, wipe him as a hateful stain from that world of which he felt himself unworthy.

Yet so long as strength remained, or any hope of conquering surrounding obstacles kept alive the power of exertion,

lord Welbrooke continued to contend: but at length he was obliged to submit, and he sat down on a fragment of rock to rest, and wait till morning light should enable him at least to form some general idea of his situation, which the increasing lightning only rendered more bewildering.

The thunder began now to roll in the dark clouds so many hours collecting, and shortly increased to the most horrible bellowing, reverberated by the mountain echoes, till the wide universe seemed to "shake beneath the voice of its roaring," and in the terrible confusion, the rocks seemed to tremble to their base, and even mighty Snowdon shrink before the tempest. By degrees even this awful solemnity, these dreadful preparations of destruction, became more alarming; the short cracking of the opening clouds, and the forked lightning darting immediate destruction, came near and more near; and the conscious sinner felt as if Almighty justice had formed in the conflicting elements a magnificently dreadful procession,

as the prelude of that execution which every instant threatened to fall on his devoted head.

Alone he sat on the naked rock, cut off from all human converse, all human hope, and all heavenly benediction, his senses stunned by the crashing sounds, the fiery darts which now seemed to set "all ether in a blaze," and now to leave it in darkness impenetrable, yet in that darkness give time to recover thought, and new-whet the stings of conscience; images of long-tried love, of kind connubial faith, of parental fondness, flitted before his eyes, and contrasted what he was with what he might have been. The deathbed of one who, rich in virtue, surrounded by a fond and grateful progeny, and living to a good old age, falls off "like a shock of ripe corn into the hands of the heavenly garner," was before him; how different to his own! a being who had worn out love and patience, even where it was felt most fondly, practised most generously—whom his chil-

dren might obey and pity, but must condemn and despise; and who, in another race, had heaped execration on his own head, misery and guilt on theirs—*guilt!* oh, what accumulated horrors rose at that word! If the succeeding crash had offered annihilation, oh, how welcome it would have been!

But the fire that is *never* quenched, the worm that *never* dieth, was in his heart: he could not deceive himself; he felt that death was not eternal; but such was the severity of mental anguish, such the faithfulness of memory, as with reiterated torture she poured the words and painted the looks of Antonia anew to his heart, that at length he sunk exhausted in a death-like swoon.

The storm had spent its fury, and rolled off in sullen murmurs to the north; but the rain descended in torrents on the defenceless body of the viscount, and at once restored him a sense of life, and threatened him with its extinction; so completely was he worn out with fatigue, fasting, and sor-

row, that in any other frame of mind than that under which he suffered, it is probable that he would have sunk without further effort. But an awakened conscience renders life very precious; with the first beams of morning, the viscount, slacking his parched lips with water he scooped from the stone which had pillowed his head, pursued his way, or rather sought some path by which to extricate himself from a place which morning showed almost as terrible as night.

After wandering a considerable time, he at length spied the lake of Dolbarden, and became sensible that he had never been far from the road during the night, and a spark of hope rose in his heart as he entered the path; but it was long before any thing in the shape of assistance appeared; and his drenched limbs had again nearly refused their office, when he heard a cart at no great distance from him; the driver was a sturdy Welchman, who spoke not a word of English, but the sight of English money

tempted him to take the distressed man into his uneasy vehicle; and in this situation he happily reached the town of Llanberris, from whence he immediately dispatched a messenger for his son; for though little inclined to see him, and indeed hating to meet the eyes of any one who knew his faults, he yet felt himself too ill to be trusted to the care of any one less kind and considerate than his son—a son whom he loved and trusted too late, and whom having slighted and disliked as a child, he was condemned to fear as a man.

This generous and anxious son was already searching for his father when his messenger arrived at the house of Mrs. Morgan. Louisa was just risen, and on hearing that the viscount was ill at Llanberris, she dispatched the children in quest of Edward immediately, and on his return facilitated his departure with all that true sensibility and genuine kindness which was so natural to her, entreating him to bring the viscount immediately thither, and pro-

phesying that with Mrs. Morgan's assistance, she should presently nurse him well again.

During the absence of her husband, Louisa prepared every thing in the house so as best to contribute to the comfort of the expected patient; and in thinking of his sufferings, forgot his faults, and the little ailments which afflicted herself. Having arranged every thing to her satisfaction, she took up the newspaper which her beloved had laid out of his pocket the night before, and in turning it over, perceived the arrival of sir Donald Mackenzie mentioned. Louisa felt almost surprised that she was *not* surprised, not fluttered by this information; she read it again, but her nerves retained their equanimity; she felt convinced that she should meet him with little, if any emotion, and most sincerely did she lift up her heart to Heaven for him, that he might enjoy like calmness, and no uneasy thought for her ever more disturb his tranquillity.

Again she took up the paper, and read

with astonishment, not unmixed with sorrow, the death of colonel Bellair; convinced as she had been that her aunt had not enjoyed with him the happiness she affected to possess, and really deserved to find, she yet sympathized in the shock she would experience when this awful termination of their union was revealed to her: pursuing this subject, and noting the place where he died, she could not help believing but the appearance of lord Welbrooke in the country now, was someway connected with this affair, and it tended not a little to sooth her fears respecting all that appeared mysterious in her husband's late conduct; and re-assured by his evident love for her, and the undeviating integrity of his mind, and, till now, the ingenuousness of his conduct, she felt that she could wait without anxiety the development of all that appeared mysterious, and embrace with fortitude whatever might eventually be proved unfortunate.

Whilst Louisa sat with anxious eyes waiting the arrival of the chaise from Llan-

berris, she beheld one drawn by four smoking horses, advance rapidly down the road from Beth-Gellard; it was an object of attention in this country, but became doubly so as it drew up to the house; and inquiries were made by the postboys "if this were Mr. Sefton's residence?" but scarcely could Louisa conjecture who might be the visitant so unexpected, and almost undesired, at such a juncture, when she found herself embraced by her dear, her long-lost brother.

"But where is Edward, my dear?" cried the gallant soldier, as he twinkled away a tender and somewhat anxious tear, "where is your husband, Louisa?"

"My dear Edward will be home soon, but unhappily his errand is a painful one."

"But he is not only your husband, Louisa, but your *dear* husband—you said *dear*, did you not?" said Henry, with an expression of the most lively solicitude in his eyes.

"Oh yes! yes!" exclaimed Louisa,

with glistening eyes and glowing cheeks, "he is the best, the very *best* of men."

"I could have told you that long ago, Louisa, but my question went to your feelings, not your judgment. I have had many a doubting, anxious hour for you, fearful that, like myself, *your* heart had wandered in forbidden ground; but thank God I am mistaken! you love Edward, I see, and therefore you must be happy."

"You *have been* right," said Louisa, blushing more deeply; "but you know my father says that which is excellent *must* be loved; and so I—I, in short, I *do love* my husband exceedingly, Henry."

"And he *knows* you do?"

"I can't say I ever said as much—that is, not in so many words—but surely my actions—indeed last night I *said so,* or pretty near it."

"Last night! upon my word, you English damsels are mighty slow at confession; you have been married a twelvemonth next week, and *last* night you said, or *pretty*

nearly said, you loved your husband. I wish I had been with you before, how many heartaches had I saved poor Ned!"

Henry was interrupted; another chaise arrived. Edward alighted, and with joyful astonishment welcomed his youthful friend, but allowed himself not to ask a single question ere he claimed help for his father, who had arrived in the chaise so ill, as to require the assistance both of himself and the apothecary, who had been called to him in the morning. He was borne to Louisa's bed, as being the best in the house, and she, with the truest tenderness, took her stand beside it, as his chief nurse and comforter. But the viscount, racked with intolerable pain, and wounded with cureless anguish, could accept of no comfort; he talked incessantly of his wife, and insisted upon it that she alone understood his constitution, and could render him effectual assistance. "Oh, Emma, Emma, why are you not here? I shall be lost for want of my wife," was his querulous complaint, his incessant burthen.

Edward, on finding him so ill, had sent for a physician from Caernarvon, and his own servant from Beth-Gellard, who both arrived in the course of the evening; but the former gave little hopes, the latter little assistance. Lord Welbrooke required the presence of his son perpetually; and scarcely could he, from time to time, snatch five minutes with his long-loved friend, ere he was called to the sick man's couch, who, in accusing himself, and saying it was natural that he should be deserted, inflicted a wound beyond reproach on the compassionate bosom of his son. During the course of the night, the fever, which had now been many hours increasing, rose to delirium, and the agonies under which he laboured, and the heart-rending expressions he now used, while bemoaning his crimes, and lamenting their consequences, would have harrowed a heart of stone; but as he still cried out perpetually for Emma, it struck both Mr. and Mrs. Sefton that it was probable the sight of his daughter might give him comfort,

and that he might accept her as the substitute of her mother—the representative of a wife it was his crime to have neglected, and his punishment to sigh for in vain.

"Will you, my dear Henry," said Edward, "have the goodness to set out for Cheltenham for my aunt and Emma; I am ashamed to ask you, but the case is urgent."

"And I am ashamed *too*; there are fifteen hundred pounds in my pocket that have lain there all night, though they were put in expressly for you."

Edward took the money, as he would have given it, *with ease* and pleasure; and Henry hastened to fulfil his commission, and likewise to engage a physician of eminence to accompany them. On entering Mrs. Danvers's lodgings at Cheltenham, he felt disappointed on seeing her alone, for he wished to surprise Emma Sefton, without inquiring particularly into his own reasons. As, however, she was not there, he made his *entrée* as well as he was able, and, in a few words, said how ill lord Wel-

brooke was, and how much he wished to see his daughter.

Mrs. Danvers took a pinch of snuff with great composure, and then said, " Pray, young gentleman, pardon the impertinence of an old woman, who is going to ask a strange question. Did you ever see me before ?"

" I think I have, madam ; but really cannot say where."

" Then I will tell you ; it was in Piccadilly, one cold, blowy morning, about five years ago, when you ran down the street to catch a poor child's hat—it may be six years."

Henry recollected the circumstance, for it was the first day on which he wore the habiliments of a soldier.

Mrs. Danvers, enraptured with the circumstance, and still more with her own penetration, ran on with such velocity, as to open all her sentiments and presentiments, and in the midst of her dissertation, entered Emma, who was certainly as much

surprised as Edward hoped, but not as much pleased as her aunt thought necessary.

In a short time they set out on their journey, dispatching the physician first, since Mrs Danvers could not be hurried; in fact, there was no persuading her that dispatch was necessary; she said, "the old proverb comforted *her*; lord Welbrooke would not die; and, as to his being ill, why, the worse for his body, the better for his soul, she hoped;" and then flying the circumstance, she again talked of the oddity of her taking such a fancy to major Deverell (for such was Henry become); and as she had never told Emma of this fancy before, by regularly relating the incident which gave rise to it at every inn they came to, she made herself ample amends for past taciturnity; nor did she weary her auditor, though she was subject to such weariness.

Whether "on this hint he spoke," or whether his heart was charmed by the thorough good-humour, unaffected sprightliness, gentle manners, and unoffending wit

of his fair companion, certain it is, that this journey was of no common interest either to Henry or Emma; and from this time there was an understanding between them, which contributed to the happiness of one, and the consolation of the other —we say consolation, for surely the daughter of lord Welbrooke wanted consolation when she beheld the severe sufferings, saw the altered form, and heard the dreadful self-denunciations which he perpetually uttered in his ravings against himself; and the delirium in which we left him, continued many days after the arrival of Emma. At length, however, it subsided, and the restoration of his senses was a source of great relief to all around him, but appeared but little to benefit himself, as he was involved in a deep, unmoving melancholy. The fever had now left him, and the pains which had racked his frame were subsided; but there was every reason to fear the disease had settled upon his lungs, and that a rapid decline would succeed it.

During the time of his illness, his steward had been sent for (as well as his other children duly informed,) and on recovering some degree of mental power, he dispatched this person, on whose wisdom and fidelity he could depend, to Antonia, furnishing her with a letter to lay before her uncle, in which he owned her as his legitimate relation, the daughter of his deceased cousin, Charles Maynard, a gentleman who in fact died at the time he became acquainted with her mother, and whose name he thus borrowed to impose upon her. He was well aware that although her uncle might be thus imposed upon, her husband could not; but he hoped to gain him to consent easily to an imposition necessary for his own interest, and which he now adopted as the only possible means of doing justice to Antonia; for one crime ever leads to the commission of others.

Lord Welbrooke did not reveal this transaction to Edward, but as he appeared easier after the steward had departed, and he had repeatedly desired him to command in

all matters of pecuniary retribution, he was in hopes that something of this kind was the object of his mission. On the steward's return, he was evidently worse; that person described Antonia as looking wretchedly pale, and being sunk in melancholy; that she told him to deliver this message to his lord, "I accept your explanation, but it is solely for the sake of your son, otherwise I would hold you up to eternal infamy; for my contempt is, if possible, equal to your crimes."

The steward said that sir Donald Mackehzie was then with his lady and her uncle; that he was informed his own relation was offended with his marriage, and that he was much involved in debt, being both excessively extravagant and giving to gaming; "so," added he, "you see he is forced to knuckle to the old Spaniard on one side, notwithstanding his high spirit, and he bends a good deal to his lady on the other, they say, because he is monstrous fond of *her*, and she does not care a farthing for him."

Edward had been anxious, on the first appearance of reason and convalescence, to engage his father in the serious consideration of making all possible retribution, as far as it was possible, to those whom he might have injured—to all who owed their being to him, the means of honest subsistence; and next to this, he earnestly desired to lay before his diseased soul that hope and help which the Christian dispensation opens for the repentant sinner. But it was rarely in his power to claim attention on these points, and he found that some other person would be listened to with more efficacy, for the very sight of his son awoke feelings which urged him to despair. He therefore inquired for a pious clergyman in the neighbourhood; and being directed by Mrs. Morgan, one day set out to seek the person she mentioned, accompanied by Henry, who had taken up his abode at Beth-Gellard.

Emma and Louisa took it by turns to sit with lord Welbrooke, who rarely chose to

have two persons at a time; and sometimes, when he dropt into a slumber, Mrs. Morgan would relieve the latter. Emma and her aunt had taken a short airing; and Louisa perceiving his eyes closed, wished to find herself a book, and while she descended, beckoned to Sally, who was in the garden, to come up and watch the patient. Proud to be employed about a lord, Sally flew up stairs, and with some trepidation took her mistress's chair.

In a few minutes lord Welbrooke opened his eyes, and on perceiving a stranger, said, "Louisa, who is that?"

Sally rose, and walking up to him, dropt a curtsey, and replied mechanically, "I am Sally Dixon, sir; and my mother was Sally Dixon, of the parish of Chapelrick, near the city of Bristol."

Lord Welbrooke closed his eyes, shuddered, and motioning with his hand, cried, "Unreal mockery, hence!"

"I don't mock indeed, sir, I don't—I know how I was a poor lost child among the gypsies, who made me tell stories, and

mock beggars, and starved me, and beat me all black and blue, and so made me wicked; but now my good lady has taken me, and fed me, and taught me to pray to God and read the Bible, I wouldn't mock nobody—no, not for the world."

During this harangue, lord Welbrooke slowly withdrew his hand, and gazed on Sally's face; and while thus employed, his daughter re-entered with her book, and told Sally she might leave the room.

"Where did you get that child from?"

Louisa simply related the facts she knew respecting her.

"And the mother is dead?"

"So I understand. Of her father the child seems totally ignorant; perhaps he too is dead, for whenever I have questioned her, she says she never had one."

The viscount groaned.

"The mother was a servant at a lodging-house at Clifton, I understand."

"She said she should die!" muttered the viscount; then starting, exclaimed,

"Where is Edward? I must see him this very moment—Quick, quick! I am ill, very ill—My side!—oh, my side!"

"Edward is not in; he is gone for the clergyman of whom he spoke—Take these drops, my dear sir; they will relive you."

"No, no—no drops; my son, my son!—Come here, Louisa; tell him—tell Edward—that girl—a thousand pounds—Oh! what a pain was that!—my son! my son!"

In great alarm Louisa called to Sally to send Miss Sefton that moment, having heard the carriage advancing to the house. Emma hastened up stairs, having that moment entered, and shocked with the expression of her father's countenance, and the terrible hue that overspread his features, she desired Louisa to go down and send her aunt and Mrs. Morgan. Her request was instantly complied with, and, for the first time, Mrs. Danvers beheld the patient—beheld him with surprise, dismay, and pity.

Lord Welbrooke's eyes rolled fearfully towards the door as Mrs. Danvers entered,

as if to meet his son; but on seeing her, recoiled with terror; he then looked pitiably towards Emma, who, dropping on her knees by the bedside, took his hand, and leaned her cheek towards his.—" Who, who is this? another child, hey?"

"It is Emma, your daughter, my dear father."

"Thou art Emma's daughter, my own beloved Emma—Pity me—pardon me, my child!"

"My dear sir! my beloved father! do not speak thus! you know how truly my mother loves you, how anxiously she would attend on you were she here."

"I *do* know, Emma; then tell her to give the child a thousand pounds—little Sally, I mean—Tell Edward—Heaven has mercy; it permits me—to be just—to——"

Exhausted he sunk back on his pillow, and Emma wept over him in pure compassion. Presently he exclaimed again in inexpressible agony, "Emma, Emma! my wife, my better angel! forgive me!—shield my name from infamy! let not my

children curse me—Emma, thou only canst help in this world, my dear, *dear* wife!"

Mrs. Danvers approached the bed, and taking his hand with solemn tenderness, she said, "In me behold the mother of your wife, and from my lips accept the full, free pardon, which her in heaven and her on earth would alike give you were they present! and may God, for the sake of your blessed Redeemer, pardon you also!—look to him, he alone can help you!"

"Amen——a—men!" feebly escaped the lips of lord Welbrooke, and a slight convulsion contracted his features.

Mrs. Danvers fell upon her knees, and raising her clasped hands to heaven, cried, "Father of mercies, receive his spirit!" and ere she rose, that spirit had escaped to its eternal audit.

CHAP. IX.

The consternation of Edward will be readily conceived when, upon his return, he found this awful termination of his cares had taken place ; but he was still more affected when he learnt that broken account of Sally, and his father's legacy to her, which marked the nature of her claims upon him but too strongly ; yet, whilst he deplored the sins of the departed, like him he humbly hoped that the repentance so deeply felt, and the providential developments which had so lately taken place, were indications of divine mercy, and proofs that the chastisement bestowed on a returning prodigal, was that of a father.

To Henry alone did Edward reveal the past follies and crimes of his erring parent, and that only to show to his friend, and confirm to his own heart, the baleful consequences of thus nurturing a selfish and

destructive passion, violating the finest chords of society, and immolating virtue and happiness together. Accompanied by his friend, he performed the last duties to a father, who, in thus suffering and dying, seemed to the kind and duteous children he had left to have expiated all the errors of his life. But although sensibility may be thus awakened towards the unworthy, and is often peculiarly called forth from that very circumstance in pious and feeling minds, yet such lamentation is in its nature transient, whilst that awakened by virtue and esteem increases with lapse of time; and when grief, as a passion, has subsided, regret, less violent, but equally honourable, succeeds; many a sigh embalms his actions, many a good deed springs from his example, for "the memory of the just is blessed."

While these events were passing at home, news had been forwarded to the Madeiras of the death of colonel Bellair; and his widow, after the first shock was over, became extremely anxious to return to Eng-

land, well aware that her affairs required her presence. The whole party had been too much indebted to her vivacity and talents, her sympathy and exertion, not to insist on accompanying her, which they were the more inclined to do on account of the uncommon fineness of the autumn, and they began to make preparations accordingly. The very day of their embarkation, another packet brought from England that melancholy detail, which, in this little circle, condemned another person to the sorrows of widowhood. But as this information was of course given only to sir Francis, he broke it by degrees, during their voyage, to lady Welbrooke, who, although deeply affected, yet received much consolation from learning that her husband had died in an affectionate intercourse with his children. Every painful circumstance respecting his death was thus spared to her, and by that means the relief afforded by her voyage was rendered permanent, and her long-wearied, long-suffering heart,

was enabled to look forward to a peaceful evening at last.

As soon as Edward (henceforth lord Welbrooke) had laid his father in the tomb of his ancestors, he returned to his Louisa, who had positively refused to accompany Mrs. Danvers and Emma back to Cheltenham. "One month," said she, "I am determined to spend in this place; for notwithstanding I have suffered much in this humble abode, I have also enjoyed much, for my heart has here been knit to my beloved Edward, in a manner which it never might have been if we had still resided in the world; and here will I fulfil the tenderest duties, and claim the best privileges of a wife—here will I sooth his sorrows, and emulate his virtues.

The gentlemen returned together; but Henry only remained two days with them in Wales, which did not excite the surprise, scarcely the regret of either, for they loved him so truly, as to be anxious for his pleasure and happiness, and in each other they felt they had a world. There was

now no fear, no doubt; all was open confidence, firm reliance, and pure affection; and in the congeniality of their taste, feelings, opinion, and action, Louisa saw every hour how much more truly her father had read her heart, and understood her happiness, than she had done herself; and became thoroughly aware, that with a man less pious, enlightened, self-subdued, considerate, conciliating, and affectionate than Edward, loving as she loved, thinking as she thought, and feeling as she felt, she would have been miserable, though surrounded with splendor, and married to fame.

It will be readily supposed that this amiable couple did not quit the widow and her children without rendering her a rejoicing mother, thankful to God for unexpected relief; and to them as the kind dispensers of his mercy; yet as she was in the prime of life, and the mother of two daughters, and in possession of a house larger than she wanted, it was her desire to resume her plan of keeping a boarding-school, which

she now successfully pursued, Miss Peters becoming her partner, and Sally Dixon one of her pupils. With all the activity of benevolence, Louisa, during the remainder of her stay, arranged this plan, and took care that nothing should be wanting that could tend to give it success; and when not thus employed, she wandered through these romantic scenes with her lord, listened to his detail of circumstances, which exculpated him from blame; and in forgiving and being forgiven even a look of coldness—in praising and being praised for exertions of connubial love and forbearance, found the sweetest reward of virtue, the dearest consolation for suffering, and the highest motive for future emulation human happiness can bestow.

This admirable pair quitted a retreat endeared to them by many circumstances, amidst the tears and good wishes not only of a family who idolized them, but many children of poverty whom their goodness had relieved, and their active benevolence

effectually served; so that lady Welbrooke could not help observing, that in no period of her life had she been so useful as that in which she had appeared to be cut off from the enjoyments of fortune, and the gifts of beneficence; so possible is it for a little property judiciously applied to be of extensive service. They travelled slowly, and were met by their own carriage and servants at some distance from home, where they were received by a joyful tenantry, both of their own and sir Francis Mowbray's, with every demonstration of affection and honour; and in a few days were joined by Mrs. Danvers and Emma, to whom succeeded Henry, while affectionate letters from sir Bennet Lawson awaited their arrival, and informed them that no less a circumstance than the confinement of his lady should have prevented them from meeting relatives so entirely respected and beloved.

"What a sweet place this is!" said Henry, as they were all sallying out on the lawn, "and in such good order too; by the way,

I wonder what condition my house is in at Cleveland."

"It is proper you went to see," said Louisa; "depend upon it I shall not allow you to stay here much longer."

Her raillery was interrupted by the servant announcing Mr. Mackenzie and his lady.

The name caused a quick pulsation in every heart, for they had no doubt but the man meant sir Donald and Antonia, since he remembered sir Donald as Mr. Mackenzie, the visitor two years before; but on going into the house they beheld a fine-looking elderly man, whose white locks contrasted with the ruddy hues of his cheek, and a lady of most pleasing countenance.

Henry had naturally lingered last, for he had no desire to see Antonia; but the gentleman apologizing to lord Welbrooke for intruding on him, said, "he was desirous of seeing Mr. Mackenzie," and darting his eye over the ladies, addressed Henry, saying, "though you have changed your

complexion, sir, I must challenge you as my relative; you own another name now, I am told: but I must call you Harry Mackenzie."

"My dear, *dear* sir, my best and earliest friend, how I rejoice to see you! this is indeed delightful."

"Thank you, my dear boy, for considering it so; but you have certainly misnamed me: let me inquire after him who is indeed your *best* friend, good sir Francis."

"Sir Francis," said Henry, "is so much above all friends, all fathers, in fact, every thing human in my ideas, that I never put him in competition with any thing else. Alas! he is far away at present; but see, his daughter asks your remembrance; you knew her, like me, a wee bairnie."

Lady Welbrooke gave a hand to each of these dear friends, whom she welcomed with a tear of affection, for her mother had taught her to love them, and her lord was anxious to show them every attention in his power. They learned that this visit

had been intended to surprise Henry in his own house, near which they had passed in returning from Weymouth. Mr. Mackenzie had been now many years resident in Cumberland, and had much to hear, and much to say of the time which had intervened; but he was interrupted by the bustling entrance of a servant, who in whispering something to his lord, said, "I was afeard, sir, my lady might be fluttered."

"You are right, James; I will come out."

Lord Welbrooke left the room, beckoning Henry to follow.

"What are those two wiseheads about?" said Emma, running after them.

In a moment she returned with her face covered with smiles and tears—"My mother is arrived," said she; "Edward is conducting her up stairs."

"Your mother," cried Louisa, "and not mine! oh Heavens!"

"Yes, thine, *thine* also," cried a voice dear to her heart.

In a moment Louisa felt herself clasped alternately to the heart of either parent; joy dimmed her eyes; she was nearly fainting; but the kind cares of Mrs. Mackenzie, who was the only person that had their senses about them, soon relieved her; and as she gazed upon her father's restored form and ruddy countenance, and beheld the beaming eyes of her mother, she felt indeed "the sober certainty of waking bliss;" and as she held a hand of each, and turned her streaming eyes to Heaven, she cried, "Oh, God, I thank thee! my cup of happiness is now overflowing—this, only this was wanting."

The baronet bowed his head in deep, though silent adoration; he felt the full force of his daughter's words; his heart, like hers, said only, "this was wanting;" he was assured of her happiness, and that was enough; the mother, if possible more anxious, burst into tears of joy, and sobbed aloud; there was in their hearts a communion that called not for words; they rejoiced

together, and together they arose in gratitude to Heaven.

"I suppose a time will come," said a voice that faltered in despite of itself, "when you will have done kissing and crying, and then perhaps I may be seen."

"My dear, dear aunt," cried Louisa, springing forward, "pray forgive me."

"I intend it, my dear; for as I expect henceforward to live near you, it would be very inconvenient to quarrel with you; country neighbours should be good friends."

"I hope, my dear sister, that is a promise to me," said lady Mowbray, "and that I may long reckon on you as my guest."

"Indeed you may, my dear, if your husband will allow it; for many years I have acted the happy wife in society; out of pure pique, I will be consistent, and retire from the world, now I am become a widow; and when—when I have forgot

the visions of hope which flattered and deceived me, but are now gone for ever, I doubt not but I may become in reality the happy character I have through many a year of misery endeavoured to sustain."

Lord Welbrooke now appeared to lead his lady to his mother, who received her with a warmth of fondness, a fullness of affection, and even gratitude, which affected Louisa more than any thing she had yet felt—"You have made my son happy, and in doing it you wipe the tears of sorrow from his mother's eyes; you are indeed my daughter:" such was the language of the widowed mother; and oh, how precious was the testimony!

Henry had been embraced before Louisa, but he was again in his mother's arms, and Emma in those of sir Francis, to whom she looked with a daughter's confidence: poor Mrs. Danvers, one moment running to her niece, another apologizing to the strangers, declared she could not help the confusion; and yet somehow she could not

help thinking it lucky that they should all come in together, as it were; and the de-lighted guests were precisely of the same opinion. As the first ebullition of feeling subsided, sir Francis and his lady beheld their appearance with the sincerest delight, and Henry hailed it as the harbinger of happiness. The stay of the good clergyman was necessarily short; lord Welbrooke insisted on his being his guest one week; sir Francis secured him another; but the beginning of the third, he declared positively that his next Sabbath should be held in his own parish in Cumberland.

Henry was exceedingly attached to his relative, and Emma partook his feelings; they both assured sir Francis that they had never met with a clergyman they liked half so well. Sir Francis said, "he was not surprised at their predilection; but he had no time to descant on his virtues; he had business with the dowager lady Welbrooke."

When sir Francis left lady Welbrooke, who was sitting with Louisa, he found Em-

ma alone in the breakfast-parlour, for Henry, who had walked over to breakfast from Sefton Hall, was gone. The baronet thought Emma was low, and on looking at her, saw traces of tears in her eyes.

" I suppose," said sir Francis, " Henry will leave us soon to see his own house, and put it in order; he has been so long engaged, that his regiment will rest some months, and during that time he may fit up his little Paradise, for such I can assure you it is, very neatly."

" La, sir Francis, how you talk! as if a *man* could fit up a house. I suppose it will be in the true camp style—chairs, beds, and tables all *en militaire*, with broad-swords across the mantle-pieces, and blunderbusses in the library."

" Suppose, Emma, you go and help him; to be sure winter is coming on, and London is more enticing; but still, I really think the benevolence of such an action would compensate you."

" What can you mean, sir Francis?"

" Aye, what indeed! I am an unintelli-

gible old man, but I will send you a person to translate me into English, Emma."

The baronet overtook Henry soon, for there were times when he walked so slow, that extreme old age might have done it.

"Our bustle of returning, and the presence of our friends, has prevented me from having any conversation with you, my dear Hal," said sir Francis, in his most serious tone of kindness; "but I have seen enough of open forgiveness in your countenance, and even of unrestrained cheerfulness in your manner, to convince me that you have quite conquered your unhappy—that is, your ill-founded passion."

"Perfectly, my dear sir, perfectly."

"Oh yes, I see you are heart-whole; and therefore I trust you will find no great stretch of obedience in adopting a plan for your future happiness, your mother and myself are equally desirous of seeing you pursue: we flatter ourselves we know a woman that would make you truly happy, and——"